BOOKS RECEIVED

Yersiniosis

By N. S. MAIR and E. FOX. 1986. *The Public Health Laboratory Service*, London. Pp. 48. £10.00.

This booklet on yersiniosis from the PHLS has been written by two authors who must have more practical experience of the handling of yersiniae than any others in the UK. Its three central chapters—dealing with, in turn, the laboratory diagnosis of human yersiniosis, the isolation of yersiniae from non-human sources and the identification of the different serovars and species—comprise the major part of this short book (48 pages). Although it contains a wealth of valuable technical information that is useful to have in a single publication, the absence of an index, even from a book as short as this, makes the task of finding the details more difficult than it need have been. The appendix, on the other hand, with its useful formulae of favoured media, was most helpful. I felt there were places where the authors could have been a bit more expansive: for example, as well as being told how to perform cold enrichment for yersiniae from human faeces, a stronger assessment of the relative merits and demerits of the technique, and its very relevance, would have been appreciated. Again, useful as it is to know how to prepare absorbed O antisera required for full identification of serovars of species important in human infection, some readers might have preferred to know of a commercial supplier, or even that none exists.

In two other very brief chapters, the first and the last in the book, the clinical aspects of yersiniosis and the pathogenicity and virulence of yersiniae (other than the plague bacillus) are dealt with summarily. But, of course, this is not intended to be, as the references confirm, a recent review of this fascinating group of Enterobacteriaceae. It is a straightforward, useful manual for the laboratory diagnosis of yersiniosis and therein lies its strength. At only £10 (post and package included) it should not unduly stretch the financial resources of those in laboratories intent on searching for yersiniae on a routine or occasional basis. The book (cheque with order) is available only from: PHLS Supplies, 175 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5HW.

D. C. OLD

Hospital hygiene

By ISOBEL M. MAURER. 1985, 3rd edn. Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd, London. Pp. viii and 152. £6.95.

Mrs Maurer's book on Hospital Hygiene is one of the standard texts on the practical aspects of hospital cleaning and disinfection. The importance of efficient cleaning, rather than relying on chemical disinfection and heat for disinfection and sterilisation, is justifiably stressed. The chapters on "Cleaning the hospital" and "Chemical disinfection: fiction and facts" are particularly relevant to the problems of privatisation of domestic services and should be helpful to those required to draw up cleaning contracts with industry. Our hospitals are becoming increasingly dirty due to lack of finance for staff and materials, and often supervision of cleaning staff is inadequate. We know that clean surroundings promote good practices but, unfortunately, one of our problems as infection control advisers is that "dirt" does not necessarily imply an increased infection risk. There is a useful section on insect and other pests and although we all agree these are undesirable there is, again, a lack of evidence that pests are responsible for hospital infection.

This new edition of the book has changed very little. It includes brands of disinfectants used in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, new sections on "True stories" and "Teaching and learning", and an expansion of other chapters. Although some of the photographs are probably unnecessary, the cartoons are excellent.

The main criticism of the book is that it does not include much of the recent work in this field and there are few references after 1980 (and none from *The Journal of Hospital Infection*). Other criticisms are minor, e.g., scouring powder will damage most new baths and sinks. However, these criticisms do not detract from the basic message of the book which is clearly written and easily understood by staff with little scientific training. It should be read by domestic, catering, CSSD, supplies and other managers. The Infection Control Officer and Nurse will still find it useful for teaching purposes and for preparing a disinfectant policy.

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