BOOKS RECEIVED

Pseudomonas aeruginosa. Infections and Treatment

Edited by A. L. BALTCH and R. P. SMITH. 1994. ISBN 0-8247-9210-6. Marcel Dekker Inc., New York. Pp. 615. No price quoted.

This monograph must be one of the most authoritative clinical texts on *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infections I have come across. It was a pleasure to review because of both its readability and its depth. All chapters are well referenced (the chapter on antimicrobial therapy has 381 references) although there is a distinct transatlantic bias; all but a handful of the references refer to the American literature.

The opening chapter reviews the history of pseudomonas infections and the importance of biofilms. Mechanisms of pathogenesis, including the role of pili, toxins and other virulence factors, are discussed. A section on hospital epidemiology covering subjects such as antimicrobial resistance and methods of typing, is followed by a series of detailed clinical reviews on *P. aeruginosa* infections.

The chapters on bacteraemia and endocarditis are thorough and cover pathogenesis, clinical manifestations and treatments; there is also a discussion of the rationale behind combination therapy. The chapter on pneumonia and lower respiratory tract infections is complemented by a detailed chapter on cystic fibrosis. This covers host factors and host-bacterial interactions, as well as clinical manifestations and epidemiology. It includes a balanced discussion of topical cross-infection issues such as the need to isolate patients colonised with *P. cepacia*. Furthermore,

the chapter is up-to-date and discusses recent advances in gene therapy.

There follows a series of relatively short chapters on infections of the urinary tract, central nervous system (including CSF shunt infections), skeletal system, skin and soft tissues, eye, and ear. All these clinical chapters are well written and provide a useful reference for some of the more difficult problems a clinician may encounter. The following chapter on colonisation of the gastrointestinal tract makes interesting reading but is, unfortunately, of limited clinical relevance. In contrast, the chapter on antimicrobial therapy is detailed and concentrates on the more frequently used agents such as β -lactam antibiotics, aminoglycosides and quinolones. The final two chapters give us a glimpse into the future by discussing the work that has been done on vaccines and immunotherapy along with the role of cytokines and endotoxins in the pathogenesis of *P. aeruginosa* sepsis. While these therapeutic modalities are in their infancy at present, it is probable that they will enter into the mainstream of anti-pseudomonal therapy in the future.

As with any multi-author work on a fairly narrow subject, there is some repetition (at least three chapters opened by telling us that *P. aeruginosa* is ubiquitous) but I found this a small price to pay for having such an informative text. Microbiologists and infectious disease physicians will find this a useful reference work and it should be compulsory reading for anyone closely involved in clinical research on *P. aeruginosa*.

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