Developments in Biological Standardization, volume 85: Genetics of Streptococci, Enterococci and Lactococci

Edited by J. J. FERRETTI, M. S. GILMORE, T. R. KLAENHAMMER and F. BROWN. 1995. ISBN 3-8055-6207-1. S. Karger, Basel. Pp. 663. DM 503.00.

This volume summarises the Proceedings of the 4th ASM Conference on Streptococcal Genetics held in May 1994. It consists of 92 papers divided into sections that represent the five lecture sessions held at the conference; gene transfer and antibiotic resistance, pathogenic streptococci, oral streptococci, lactococci and bacteriocins. The volume opens with the lecture given by Maclyn McCarty on the origins of streptococcal genetics. This historical perspective is very appropriate as the conference coincided with the 50th anniversary of the discovery of DNA as the transforming principle. The inclusion of this discussion provides a good background for the many recent developments in the molecular biology and genetics of this important group of bacteria.

The volume is an excellent account of what was no doubt an extremely interesting conference. I would recommend this book to all workers with an interest in streptococcal genetics, for whom it will prove a useful source of information. However, the cost of the book is considerable, particularly as it is soft-bound, and is likely to be beyond most individual and many departmental budgets. Institute libraries should be encouraged to obtain a copy.

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Lecture Notes on Infectious Diseases, 5th edition

B. K. MANDAL, E. G. L. WILKINS, E. M. DUNBAR and R. T. MAYON-WHITE. 1996. ISBN 0-632-03351-7. Blackwell Science, Oxford. Pp. 347. £14.95.

The previous edition of this book was published in 1984. With the changing epidemiology of infection, the recognition of a number of new infectious diseases and the development of new diagnostic tests over the last 10 years, a new edition was badly needed. All the major changes over these years have been included, e.g., multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, *Escherichia coli* O157 infection and hepatitis C diagnostics. This book is very clearly set out. The first few chapters deal with general principles; the last few deal with topics such as infection in immunocompromised patients, tropical and parasitic infections. The bulk of the book is a systems-based review of infectious. Each clinical syndrome or specific infection is dealt with in a standard and well structured fashion that helps rapid learning and logical thought. Lists and tables are used, but are interspersed with sufficient text so that the book does not become difficult to read. There is a comprehensive index. A small number of black and white, and some colour illustrations are included which add to the book's content without increasing its cost. I have a couple of minor criticisms. In the section on system-based infection there is a lack of consistency in commenting on isolation of patients: isolation for *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* infection is advised, isolation for glandular fever is stated specifically as being unnecessary, yet there is no mention of isolation of cases of pulmonary tuberculosis or diphtheria. Co-trimoxazole is mentioned in the section on antibiotics and elsewhere in the book without any mention of its well-known toxicity or the more recent recommendations from the Committee on the Safety of Medicine on limiting its use. Nevertheless, this is an excellent core text for students and a rapid reference guide for health professionals dealing with infection.

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