Travel Medicine
Philadelphia: Mosby, 2004. 608 pp. $149.00 (cloth).

This is an authoritative volume in the rapidly growing discipline of travel medicine. The editors and many of the contributors are well-known and respected experts in the field. The chapters are well-written and are organized in a fashion that permits information to be readily accessed.

The gamut of travel-health issues is discussed in the book’s 563 pages, from setting up a travel clinic to basic travel vaccinations and the food and insect precautions required for expedition travel. The sections on water purification and insect repellants provide specific recommendations and pull together the scientific data to back them up. This information is especially helpful in areas such as these, where misconceptions and anecdotes prevail. Topics that travelers frequently ask about—for example, motion sickness, jet lag, and fear of flying—are similarly well-discussed.

I found the sections on special-needs travelers to be exceptionally useful. Special-needs travelers include children, pregnant or breast-feeding women, and elderly, disabled, diabetic, or immunocompromised individuals (e.g., those who are HIV-infected, have had a splenectomy, or are transplant recipients). There is no dearth of unusual situations and questions that come up in the course of advising travelers, and this text provides guidance for most of these situations.

Although information about vaccine and malaria chemoprophylaxis is readily accessible in a variety of other sources, the chapters discussing these topics are well done. The section on mefloquine tolerability, for example, provides clarification in light of considerable negative information in the lay press.

The bulk of the book is deliberately oriented toward pretravel assessments and recommendations. Although no attempt is made to comprehensively discuss the field of tropical medicine (several venerable texts already exist), there are ~75 pages dedicated to posttravel screening and common illnesses seen in the returning traveler. These include skin diseases (this part of the book contains excellent photographs), fever, eosinophilia, persistent diarrhea, and respiratory illness. The flowcharts are nicely done. This section contains useful and balanced chapters for infectious diseases clinicians, internists, and family practitioners.

Throughout the book, chapters begin with “keypoints,” and tables mostly complement the text and are particularly helpful in the chapters regarding vaccine and malaria chemoprophylaxis. A compact disc is included and is easy to use. An especially nice feature of the compact disc is that all of the images it contains can be saved to PowerPoint presentations, for those who give talks on travel medicine.

I have few criticisms, and there are no glaring faults with this book. The organizational style leads to some redundancy in topics, such as that of immunizations. The separate glossary of tropical diseases doesn’t seem necessary. Although most topics are well-discussed, the question of whether to provide postexposure prophylaxis for exposure to HIV (sexual exposure or needle stick exposure, as in the case of medical personnel) is not explicitly mentioned, except to reference the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site. Travel medicine is a dynamic field, and some chapters will become outdated. However, the editors recognize this and acknowledge the value of other resources, particularly those that are Internet-based, by dedicating a chapter to other sources of travel-health information. Addresses of many useful Web sites are found there.

In summary, Travel Medicine is to the practice of travel medicine what Mandell’s textbook [1] is to the specialty of infectious diseases. It belongs at the fingertips of every travel health-consultation provider and in the library of every infectious diseases training program. Infectious diseases specialists who don’t operate a travel clinic but who are called upon for occasional consultations will find it invaluable. Internists and family physicians who don’t have access to a travel medicine specialist and who provide recommendations will also want to own a copy.

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References

Tuberculosis, Second Edition
Edited by William N. Rom and Stuart M. Garay
Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2004. 944 pp., illustrated. $159.95 (cloth).

This is a revised edition of the text initially published in 1996. The book is a comprehensive review of the current knowledge and understanding of the many aspects of tuberculosis. Organized into 6 sections, the book contains a total of 60 chapters, many written by leading experts.
in tuberculosis research and management. The authors are from 9 different countries, and almost half are from New York City, which is, understandably, related to the institutional affiliations of the editors. By combining topics that were separated in the first edition, the total length of the text has been decreased by 58 pages, with 22 fewer chapters. The result is that each chapter stands alone as a concise and well-referenced review of a single topic in the study of tuberculosis. The timeliness of this updated text, as outlined in the foreword by Barry Bloom, relates to the global tuberculosis epidemic currently being fueled by coinfection with HIV. Moreover, new knowledge, in part related to the identification of the Mycobacterium tuberculosis genome, brings the potential for a better understanding of pathogenesis and the subsequent development of new tools for diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

Noticeably shortened in this edition is the first section on history and epidemiology. Retained is a chapter on tuberculosis in the arts, which lends a face and story to the disease by briefly describing the history of several notable writers and artists whose lives were indelibly shaped by their struggles with the disease. Although the historical perspectives have been shortened, several chapters begin with a review of the history relevant to the specific topic. This enhances the readability of the book and effectively illustrates how our knowledge has evolved. Following the historical perspective are chapters describing the epidemiology of tuberculosis, globally and in the United States. The section concludes with a description of molecular genotyping techniques and their role in epidemiologic investigations, in which there have been significant advances since the publication of the first edition.

Next, the book continues with sections that thoroughly review the microbiology and immunology of M. tuberculosis. The microbiologic section contains a broad array of topics, including a detailed review of the complex mycobacterial cell wall, current understanding of latent infection, genomics, and new approaches to the rapid diagnosis of infection. The section on host responses describes the complex interaction between human immune defenses and mycobacteria. Although, at times, the detailed explanations of the molecular biology and immunopathogenesis are complicated, the authors emphasize that a true understanding is far from complete. These chapters are directed mostly toward basic scientists, and the topics are represented to a greater degree than in other major textbooks on tuberculosis.

Nonetheless, the bulk of the text is still dedicated to the clinical manifestations and treatment of tuberculosis. Appropriately beginning with an in-depth review of pulmonary tuberculosis, the next chapter is dedicated to the radiographic manifestations of thoracic tuberculosis, with many illustrative radiographs and CT scans. Subsequent chapters review the many extrapulmonary manifestations of disease, often with cases which demonstrate key points. Included in this section are reviews of tuberculosis in children, pregnant women, and HIV-infected patients. Two additional chapters are devoted to nontuberculous mycobacterial infections in both HIV-negative and HIV-positive patients. These chapters offer succinct overviews without taking away from the overall theme of the book, and they also provide complete reference sections for readers requiring more detailed information. An extensive section on antituberculosis therapy follows and again has fewer chapters in this edition, without sacrificing content. The chapter on rifamycins, with new information on rifabutin and rifapentine, is particularly timely. Also new to this section is a summary of the complex pharmacokinetics and drug-drug interactions that often impact the practical administration of effective treatment, especially in HIV-infected patients.

The book concludes with a section outlining prevention and control measures. As in the rest of the text, these chapters begin with a historical overview and progress through to current knowledge. The discussion on the treatment of latent tuberculosis infection is not as extensive or as detailed as the discussion on treatment of active disease in the previous section. Although much of the text relates to tuberculosis in the United States, the global perspective is also emphasized in the discussion of many topics, and the role of international organizations is summarized in a separate chapter. Overall, the book offers a comprehensive review and will be an excellent reference source for physicians specializing in infectious diseases and pulmonary medicine, laboratory investigators of mycobacteria and immunology, and other professionals who are regularly involved in the diagnosis and treatment of patients with tuberculosis.

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