Pathogens discussed include methicillin-resistant and vancomycin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, enterococci, and Burkholderia cepacia. Comments on the hot issues of infection with community-acquired methicillin-resistant S. aureus and vancomycin-resistant S. aureus are up-to-date and highlight the current clinical dilemmas. The section falls short in the area of therapy with new drugs of the peptide class; articles that discuss daptomycin, dalbavancin, and oritavancin, and glycyclines, such as tigecycline, should have been included. Clinical advances in vaccination strategies against pneumococcus, particularly those advances that have led to a reduction in the incidence of invasive pneumococcal disease in adults via the immunization of children and to a reduction in the incidence of viral pneumonia, have provided tantalizing data, and the relevant articles make for important reading.

The final section includes articles and good discussion on typhoid from geographically diverse regions, highlighting multidrug resistance and use of vaccine; on management of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis; on diagnostic and management dilemmas presented by viral infections in hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients; on the controversy about steroid use in meningitis in the developed and developing worlds; and on emerging rickettsioses. With no recent major advances in the clinical field of Clostridium difficile infection, the chapter on this topic does not make a substantial contribution.

This well-researched handbook is ideally suited to practicing clinicians and trainees in the field of infectious diseases. Interpretations of articles are lucid and, more importantly, the contributors make candid comments on the weaknesses and strengths of each article, giving the book clinical significance. For in-depth exploration, relevant bibliographies are provided at the end of each chapter. I found the comments at the end of each article and the conclusions at the end of each chapter to be of excellent quality, refreshing and reflective of the contributors’ depths of knowledge and experience. A number of loaded comments struck a chord, such as, “…purposeful drug development is still shamefully inadequate” (referring to tuberculosis) (p. 199), “…real danger that we will return to the preantibiotic era (when 30% patients with typhoid died) if resistance continues to evolve,” (p. 183) and, “…ingenious of scientists seems poised to outwit Mycobacterium tuberculosis over the next few decades” (p. 200).

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