Clinical Infectious Disease
Edited by David Schlossberg

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 1592 pp. Illustrated. $95.00 (hardcover).

Clinical Infectious Disease uses a classic approach, with summary chapters that are focused on organ systems, specific diseases, and pathogens and their associated infections, and spans a broad array of topics. The book appears to be designed for the general internist and infectious diseases specialist, with a focus on diagnostic approaches and treatment strategies. This textbook is not designed to provide an exhaustive summary of a topic, but it is detailed enough to provide a student, general internist, or infectious diseases specialist with a brief summary of a topic with a limited number of references summarized at the end of each chapter. However, it is also not designed as a rapid review or pocket companion of infectious diseases, because it is a relatively large textbook. Most of the chapters are well written by leaders in the field and have useful figures, pictures, and tables to present the data in an organized and easy-to-follow fashion.

Some chapters are relatively exhaustive compared with others, and certain topics are not representative of the core management issues that are involved in the care of patients with infectious disease. For example, there is an individual chapter on Madura foot, and the chapter on coccidioidomycosis is double the length of most other chapters. In addition, certain fundamental and challenging issues regarding the treatment of patients with infectious disease are not sufficiently covered, including limited information on multidrug-resistant gram-negative bacteria.

Specifically, there is no thorough discussion of Klebsiella species, and the index does not list all the Klebsiella references in the textbook. Occasionally, chapter authors deviate from currently accepted approaches to diagnosis and treatment of infected patients without a clear explanation. An example of this is in the chapter dealing with nosocomial pneumonia, in which the author suggests that the time window defining a nosocomial infection is 5 days rather than the traditional 48–72 h, fails to discuss 8-day courses of therapy, and states that herpes simplex virus is a common cause of ventilator-associated pneumonia that is unresponsive to antimicrobial agents after 2 weeks of therapy. There is an exhaustive table of antimicrobial agents at the end of the textbook; however, some dosing recommendations do not agree with the recommendations from individual chapters. In addition, not all drugs are adequately addressed; this is reflected in the lack of discussion regarding daptomycin not being indicated for treatment in pneumonia, no mention of the high rate of gastrointestinal intolerance of tigecycline, the inclusion of trovafloxacin despite it not being available, no indication that ciprofloxacin dosing of 400 mg every 8 h is often recommended, and inadequate detail regarding the varying formulations and dosing regimens of colistin. Although the HIV treatment section addresses many of the concerns that face those who are caring for HIV-infected patients, treatment guidelines referenced in the book have been updated twice since publication, and the discussed “novel” future agents are now approved by the US Food and Drug Administration.

Overall, in an Internet era with rapid access to review articles, guidelines, and Web sites that provide frequent updates on infectious diseases, the utility of short textbooks that provide summary reviews of specific infectious disease topic areas continually diminishes. As an infectious disease fellowship program director, I frequently query fellows in my program to determine which of the shorter infectious disease textbooks and/or Internet sites they prefer as a quick review source. Universally, they all discuss various Internet sites, but a number of them have recommended this textbook as a source for brief reviews of topics. Despite the limitations outlined in this review, this textbook has many qualities that encourage me to recommend it as an infectious disease topic textbook.

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Scientific Errors and Controversies in the U.S. HIV/AIDS Epidemic: How They Slowed Advances and Were Resolved
By Scott D. Holmberg
Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007 228 pp., Illustrated. $49.95 (hardcover).

Dr. Scott Holmberg, who was well known for his organized and careful epidemiological studies while at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, took on a large task in attempting to cover a large swath of the issues in population- and patient-oriented HIV/AIDS research. He is to be given credit for speaking frankly, for covering a lot of ground, and for some well-presented chapters (e.g., “Counting Cases”). The book is not—and probably