

**FEATURES
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Book Review

Essentials of Microbiology for Dental Students, 2nd Edn

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Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006

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The stated aim of this book is 'to present microbiology in a clinical context that is relevant to the safe and effective practice of dental surgery'. The aim of this book is most definitely met and would interest both undergraduate dentist and qualified dentists alike.

All major aspects of oral microbiology are covered through the book's 30 chapters, which are dispersed between three sections and supported by a comprehensive glossary at the start of the book. In each chapter there are numerous well-illustrated full colour figures and these, together with the concise summary tables, contribute to a style that makes the book a pleasure to read. At the end of the chapters, key facts of the topic are presented together with a listing of further reading, which students will find most valuable in their studies.

The first section of the book provides an introduction to micro-organisms, their pathogenicity, host defence

mechanisms, and how to combat these agents through the use of antimicrobials, disinfection and vaccination. The second section of the book, largely focuses on microbial infections at sites away from the oral cavity, but still maintains relevance to the dentist. The final section is concerned specifically with oral microbiology and associated infections, together with a chapter on the topical issue of infection control in dentistry.

This second edition has been updated throughout from its predecessor and in the case of a number of chapters, such as those covering fungi, herpes viruses and the use of antimicrobial agents in dentistry, has been completely re-written. The inclusion of recently described infectious diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and human prion diseases represent welcome additions reflecting the ongoing developments in microbiology since the book's first edition.

In conclusion, the comprehensive coverage of the subject matter and the elegant style of the figures and illustrations used by this book combine to provide a final product that can definitely be recommended as a core textbook and learning companion to undergraduate dental students.

David W. Williams