

Book Reviews

1989–1990 Pocketbook of Infectious Disease Therapy. By John Bartlett. Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, 1990, 190 pp., ISBN 0-683-00439-5, \$9.95.

The *1989–1990 Pocketbook of Infectious Disease Therapy* is a compilation of lists and tables which relate to the diagnosis and treatment of a wide variety of infectious disease entities. The author states that this book is intended for physicians and other care providers who manage adult patients with infectious diseases, with the goal of providing acceptable standards for the care of such patients. In attempting to achieve this goal, the author has collected the most recent guidelines and recommendations from a variety of sources, including the Centers for Disease Control, *The Medical Letter*, the American Thoracic Society, the American Heart Association, and the American Hospital Formulary Service, as well as others. When no guidelines existed, or existing guidelines were outdated, the author developed his own, thereby "inserting his own biases."

The pocketbook is divided into four sections. The Antimicrobial Agents section contains tables listing agents available, trade names, dosage forms, usual dosage regimens, dosage adjustments for renal and hepatic disease, adverse reactions, drug interactions, and guidelines for antimicrobial use during pregnancy, most which are referenced. An unreferenced table, "Preferred Antimicrobial Agents for Specific Pathogens," is also provided, which suggests first- and second-line treatments for infections caused by various organisms. This approach has inherent dangers in that the impact of each hospital's sensitivity patterns is not reflected. In general, the approach seems to be one of choosing a broader-spectrum agent over a more narrow-spectrum agent, i.e., imipenem as preferred agent for *Acinetobacter calcoaceticus*.

The second and third sections of the book relate to Preventive Treatment and Treatment of Nonbacterial Infections. These are largely referenced guidelines for adult immunization, selection of prophylactic antibiotics, management of travelers diarrhea, and treatment of fungal, viral, tubercular, and parasitic infections.

The last section, Specific Types of Infections, deals with diagnostic and treatment guidelines for common types of infectious diseases, including AIDS, immunodeficiency states, fever of unknown origin, CNS infections, upper and lower respiratory tract infections, endocarditis, intraabdominal sepsis, hepatitis, infectious diarrhea, urinary tract infections, and sexually transmitted diseases. Many of these tables are referenced, however, several are compiled by the author.

In general, this book, which can be carried in a pocket, can serve as a useful source of information for guidelines which are developed by consensus groups. The guidelines developed by the author for this book tend to be less broadly applicable and do not always represent a balanced approach to a particular subject, i.e., very limited information regarding pharmacokinetic monitoring of aminoglycosides and vancomycin. Recent changes in consensus group recommenda-

tions such as with measles vaccinations or zidovudine regimens, as well as information on new antimicrobials such as fluconazole and intravenous rifampin, are not included in this edition. Some minor errors in indexing exist, whereby the reader is referred to an incorrect page. I hope that these items can be addressed in the annual updates which are planned for this handbook.

Overall, this book can serve as a useful quick reference guide for use in the patient care setting. It should not be used as an authoritative reference and should not replace the exercise of sound clinical judgment.

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Irritant Contact Dermatitis. Edited by Edward M. Jackson and Ronald Goldner. Marcel Dekker, New York, 1990, xii + 223 pp., ISBN 0-8247-8288-7, \$99.75 (U.S. and Canada), \$119.50 (all other countries).

This book on irritant contact dermatitis, its etiology and diagnosis, is the second in a series on Clinical Dermatology (series editor, Alan R. Shalita). The scope of the series appears to be still evolving but planned additions include a basic dermatology text, a clinical review of acne, and clinical application of the retinoids.

The information provided is contained in 10 chapters (involving 14 authors) which are divided into three sections—*inflammation, exposures to irritants, and tests for irritants*. Covered in the inflammation section are chapters on inflammatory processes and the etiology and pathophysiology of this condition. The material on inflammation is extensive and detailed with several good figures and tables. The chapters on etiology and pathophysiology act as brief introductions to the bulk of information that follows in subsequent chapters.

In the second section on exposures to irritants, the subject of diagnosing irritant contact dermatitis provides excellent background information as well as a useful table that identifies criteria for the evaluation of irritant dermatitis. It may have been more appropriate to have placed the diagnostic chapter at the front of this section rather than at the end because it would then present a logical introduction to the chapters on occupational, topical, and botanical irritants.

The house and garden plants chapter is well written, includes black and white photos, and is a useful review of causative plants and the irritants they contain. The proposed mechanism of action of these reactions, their treatment, and their management is included.

Factors influencing or affecting skin irritancy are listed in several places throughout the book. A condensation of this material into one concise table or listing could have been presented to avoid repetition.

Contained in the chapter on occupational exposures is a