INFECTIOUS DISEASES. THEIR EVOLUTION AND ERADICATION. ED. A. COCKBURN.

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The publication is divided into 22 chapters, each of them representing an independent entity with tables, figures and references. The contributors are from many countries of the world, 14 from the U.S.A., 2 from England, 2 from Czechoslovakia, one each from Australia, Upper Volta, Denmark, Canada and the U.S.S.R. The various chapters deal with biological principles in general, with the development of human infections, with current problems of the most important viral, bacterial and parasitic diseases of world-wide distribution.

In the first two chapters of a more general nature the authors discuss the first evidence of life on Earth in connection with the origin of microorganisms. Cockburn's paper deals with questions on the parasitism of viruses, bacteria, protozoans and worms, on the origin of parasitism as a biological phenomenon, on survival mechanisms in the host and the parasite such as genetically inherited resistance, passive protection of the offsprings and the transmission of the parasite from host to host. The same author deals in the following chapter with infections of the primates. The chapter on paleoepidemiology demonstrates historical evidence on the existence of infectious diseases found on works of art and relicts of man, on eggs of parasitic worms found in archeological excavations and also on the results of serological tests for detecting venereal diseases in some Australian aborigines. The following chapter describes historical changes of the environment as one of the factors participating in the origin of diseases of man and his ancestors. Cockburn describes the evolution of infectious diseases of man and the effect of agriculture, urbanization, population increase, industrial revolution, travel and communications on zoonoses, natural selection and resistance to infection. Rosický's article contributes to questions on natural foci of diseases, on the ecological aspect in view of the development of diseases, on the characteristics of the biomes, the influence of man on the landscape and on the special structure of natural foci. The basic principles of eradication of bacterial and viral diseases are discussed by Cockburn and a summary of requirements for the eradication programme is added. Zhdanov deals in general with questions on viral diseases, their eradication and control. The next chapter discusses the various infectious diseases: smallpox, measles, poliomyelitis (with an account of the results obtained in Czechoslovakia with oral vaccination), tuberculosis, leprosy, African trypanosomiases. The concluding chapters are devoted to insecticides, pest control and infections of domestic animals in the U.S.A.

The approach to the subjects under consideration is most original. The publication offers unconventional and unusual views on infectious diseases reviewing their historical development and basic principles of eradication of the most important infectious diseases. Anyone engaging in studies of infectious diseases, their evolution and eradication should have this book at his elbow. It is packed with interesting information making it a very useful item to have around.

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