

V. V. Kucheruk (Ed.): Meditsinskaya teriologiya (Medical theriology). Publ. House Nauka, Moskva 1979, 327 pp., 42 Figs., 13 Tables. Price 3.80 R.

The role of mammals in the dissemination of various zoonoses is of utmost importance. At present over 250 infections and invasions are already known to belong into this category. The majority may be included among infections with natural focality phenomenon. In the Soviet Union this group of diseases receives an extraordinary attention. The number of papers dealing with different species and groups of mammals reaches several thousands and are often published in periodicals very difficult to come by. Therefore an urgent need has risen for a monograph which would treat the role of different mammal species in natural foci of human infections and their epidemiological importance. This task was taken up by a team of 14 leading workers of four institutes of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences, the USSR Academy of Sciences and the USSR Ministry of Health, under the guidance of the prominent specialist in this field, Prof. V. V. Kucheruk. They conceived the book on a global scale and focused attention on the representatives of two orders which are of greatest medical importance—rodents and lagomorphs—listing them in systematic order. For obvious reasons the degree of knowledge as well as the importance of particular groups of these mammals are different and this fact is reflected in the extent of text devoted to them.

The monograph is divided in two parts. The first part is entitled Biocenotic characteristics of zonal landscapes and their evaluation as environment in which the causative agents of zoonoses operate. It includes three chapters in which the peculiar features of tundra, forest landscapes and steppe are discussed as environment of mammals, and as an environment with parasitic systems associated with mammals. Abiotic and biotic characteristics of particular landscapes are given with special regard to mammals and important species of ectoparasites as well as most important zoonoses are mentioned. The second part covers a systematic survey of mammals as carriers of diseases. Particular groups are discussed on the level of families,

subfamilies, genera or species. In supraspecific taxons the basic systematic classification, geographic distribution, biotopes of occurrence, most important bionomic data, main parasites and the role as carriers of zoonoses in different parts of the world are given. The species are arranged in a similar way, with more details, including morphology and number of chromosomes. These chapters, however, include some nomenclatoric inaccuracies: invalid specific names (*Dermacentor pictus*, *Haemaphysalis otophila*), the use of diacritical marks (*Aedes*, *H. leporis-palustris*) or misspellings of Latin names (e.g. *Girardia*, *Thrichomonas*, *Pneumonicystis* — p. 116). The final section of the book includes tables surveying the representatives of Lagomorpha and Rodentia of the USSR fauna as carriers of agents causing human diseases. With particular species information is given as to the isolation or serologic demonstration of the agent, their importance in natural foci and fauna of vectors (known numbers of species of ixodid and argasid ticks as well as gamasid and trombiculid mites parasitizing them) are characterized and conditions and mechanisms of the transmission of infection to man are mentioned. The book closes with a list of literature covering 32 pages.

The monograph is intended for parasitologists, zoologists and specialists concerned with the studies of zoonoses. Presented in it are many concrete data on mammals of the two mentioned orders and on their role as carriers of agents of zoonoses from the global aspect, though main attention is devoted to the conditions in the USSR territory. The facts are well arranged and are based on numerous and profusely cited references. Figures depicting geographic distribution of particular taxons greatly contribute to the value of information presented. The book bears the stamp of the work of experienced specialists and of the unifying pattern of its editor. On the whole the monograph deserves to be highly appreciated and its appearance will be widely welcomed.

Dr. V. Černý, C.Sc.