

R.V. Cohen, F. Aun (Eds.): Tropical Surgery. A vademecum series book. *Karger Landes Systems, Basel, Switzerland, 1997, ISBN 3-8055-6497-X, soft cover. 195 figs., 15 tables, VIII+338 pp.*

In this publication a total of 63 contributors from Brazil address partial aspects of certain illnesses which occur in tropical climates. Following the foreword are 47 chapters, after which is a two-paged appendix with normal values of common biochemical and hematological laboratory methods.

As is noted in the foreword, the authors' main objective is to describe illnesses widespread in tropical and subtropical areas. They have also noted how their origin and development in these regions are often influenced by present social and epidemiological circumstances such as chronic malnutrition, poor hygiene and inadequate public health care.

Perhaps one of the more interesting aspects of this book is the perspective of experienced surgeons (as is already evident from the title). The size of this book does not provide enough space for a detailed surgical analysis and this would not be the case even if the focus were placed on those illnesses which are found more often in the tropics than elsewhere. The chapters tend to concentrate on a particular group of problems which are associated with certain nosologic units. The principles of surgical procedures are outlined; basics of pharmacological treatments are listed by subject. As can be expected, most of the chapters are devoted to infectious illness. In such cases the etiological agent, method of transmission, and epidemiological data are briefly listed. Individual chapters are accompanied by occasional charts and pictorial materials.

1. General chapters – Foreword, followed by Tropical Pathology and Nutritional Support take up a total of 4 pages.

2. Sickneses not caused by transmission agents take up a total of 33 pages. Those chapters contain a brief description of the clinical approaches. Chapter 3 is devoted to endemic goiter. Chapter 8: Valvular Heart Disease is devoted mainly to sequels of rheumatic fever. In the book of this size a full coverage of such a wide topic as rheumatic valvular diseases cannot be expected. So we find only a relatively brief summary of this problem. Chapter 30: Primary Intrahepatic Lithiasis. This is a rare disease even in tropical countries and to include this chapter, in my opinion, was not necessary.

3. Non-specific infections – Tropical Pyomyositis (chapter 9), Infectious Arteritis (chapter 10), and Fournier's Gangrene (chapter 21) compose 16 pages.

4. The problem of TBC, 24 pages. (List of the chapters see below).

5. Remaining textual content is devoted to transmissible diseases.

The main problem the student might face with this book is the manner in which the material is organised. This is another reason why the same well-known facts are repeated in several chapters. The following chapters may serve as an example. Chapter 2: Cysticercosis and Tuberculosis of the Central Nervous System. Chapter 4: Pulmonary Tuberculosis. Chapter 12: Urogenital Tuberculosis. Chapter 34: Peritoneal Tuberculosis. Chapter 35: Intestinal Tuberculosis. Chapter 45: Tuberculosis (sic!).

Similarly as in the chapters related to TBC, there are many abundant repetitions in chapters about schistosomiasis. Chapter 14: Vesical Schistosomiasis. Chapter 26: Schistosomiasis. Chapter 27: Upper GI Bleeding in Schistosomiasis. Chapter 28: Endoscopic Sclerotherapy of Esophago-Gastric Varices in Portal Hypertension Due to Schistosomiasis. Chapter 47: Schistosomiasis – Clinical Aspects.

Chapters 2, 5, 13 and 31 are devoted to cysticercosis and hydatid disease.

American trypanosomiasis: it's several aspects are described in chapters 6, 7, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 46.

Diseases caused by *Wuchereria bancrofti* (parasitic lymphedema and genital filariasis) are described in chapters 11 and 15.

Problems related to *Ascaris lumbricoides* are discussed in chapters 32 (Abdominal Complications of *Ascaris lumbricoides* in Children) and 43 (Ascariasis).

The other diseases included in the book are those caused by parasites: leishmaniasis – both cutaneous and visceral, amebiasis, angiostrongyliasis. Caused by fungi: paracoccidioidomycosis, and by bacteria: typhoid fever, lymphogranuloma venereum.

I would strongly recommend the editors to arrange the material more effectively before the next publication. This would bring the character of the book closer to that of a textbook. Regardless that, this book can be a suitable supplement to the library of a student who is interested in the given problem.

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