

BOOK REVIEWS

Microbiology Nuts and Bolts: Key Concepts of Microbiology & Infection

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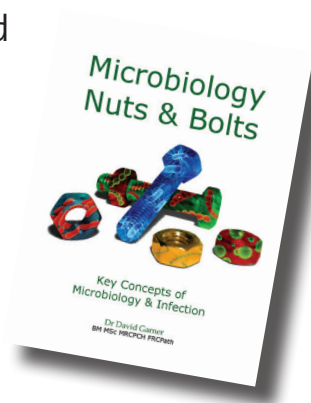
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Microbiology Nuts and Bolts is a very interesting and useful resource for those who want to have a better understanding of microbiology. The book is pocket sized and so can be carried around as a constantly available resource. It is suitable for trainees in any specialty, including those in microbiology, and would also be a useful resource to students. The layout of the book is such that it can either be read cover to cover, be dipped into to look at the areas in which you are most interested or used as a resource to look up information relating to microbiology, infection control, cases of infection or use of antimicrobials on the ward, as and when required.

The book attempts to strip down microbiology to the basic and most relevant pieces of information that are required for the management of patients. Of course, it is always very difficult to deliver only the most relevant pieces of information on any subject, and it is worth remembering that any piece of information – even the most obscure – can be relevant in the right circumstance. In addition, the book is useful for basic information, but will not enable the reader to manage some more complicated infections. This is not a criticism of the book – just a recognition of its limitations. Examples of some of the more-difficult-to-manage infections, and those in which management strategies are rapidly evolving (such that the book will become quickly out of date), include hepatitis C and MDR/XDR TB. The book is not designed to be a definitive resource on everything microbiological, but this must be borne in mind when it is being used.

The book is divided into six sections: basic concepts, microbiology, infection control, clinical scenarios, antibiotics and emergencies. The section on emergencies is particularly useful. It has a number of algorithms and management pathways to guide the management of common microbiology emergencies. A number of these emergencies are also covered by national guidance, available on the web. In the long term, it may be more useful to access some of these guidelines directly from the web, where they are constantly updated in line with changing epidemiology and antibiotic resistance. However, we are not yet in an era where these guidelines can be easily accessed by everybody at the point of patient contact and this hand-held resource will be useful in such a setting.

Each section is set out very methodically and concisely, making the book very easy to use. For example, each antibiotic has information on mechanism of action, mechanism of resistance, pharmacology and pharmacodynamics, spectrum of activity, cautions and contraindications, side effects and



monitoring. Because of the layout, it is easy to rapidly find the information that you are looking for in any particular situation.

The book also contains a number of other useful bits of information including many useful charts, e.g. A-Z of microbiology tests by specimen type, microbiology results by specimen type, isolation priority and infection control precautions, paediatric and neonatal antibiotic doses, adult sepsis golden hour management flow chart, table of antibiotic spectrum of activity, timing of samples and levels for therapeutic drug monitoring – and sections on hints and tips and common mistakes that are easy to read and contain useful information.

In summary, this is a well-written book that is concise, well set out and easy to use. It contains a wealth of useful information and is a valuable resource for those interested in improving their knowledge of microbiology. The book is practical in its size (it is pocket size), layout (information is easy to find) and content (the book attempts to contain only the most relevant information that is necessary for patient management). I would recommend this book to trainees in any specialty including microbiology and to students wishing to improve their knowledge of microbiology.

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