



EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES

A Guide to Diseases, Causative
Agents, and Surveillance

LISA A. BELTZ

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This book is dedicated to the health care professionals at the front line in the battle against infectious diseases and to the researchers who provide them with information about the enemies and weapons to defeat them.

PREFACE

HEADLINES AND NEWS REPORTS warn of “Flesh-Eating Bacteria,” “Mad Cow Disease,” the AIDS pandemic, and flu pandemics. Drug-resistant bacteria are in our hospitals and our locker-rooms, malaria incidence is on the rise, and TB is reemerging. Every year, new infectious threats appear or old diseases spread to new areas or attack with greater viciousness. Some of the new diseases rear their heads and then suddenly vanish, like SARS, while others may be with humanity for the foreseeable future. The media warn and inform of the newly emerging diseases yet also may capitalize on public fears by overstating the real danger or describing the diseases in the most gruesome terms possible before moving on to the next “killer virus” predicted to kill tens of millions of people. Meanwhile, other, less spectacular diseases spread unnoticed through certain segments of the world’s population (as babesiosis or cryptosporidiosis in immunosuppressed persons or dengue hemorrhagic fever in many parts of the world). This book attempts to provide a balanced overview of some of the emerging and reemerging diseases of current times. No single text could cover all of these diseases, but a number of illnesses have been selected which are found in different regions of the world. Many of these strike tropical regions or developing countries with particular virulence, others are found in temperate or developed areas, and still other microbes and infections are more indiscriminate. In five or ten years, other diseases may have emerged as major killers of humanity while some of the current threats may have been neutralized by the development of new drugs, vaccines, or other preventive measures. Poverty, civil unrest and war, and lack of access to modern health care supplies and facilities have fueled epidemics of some of the diseases covered in this book. If these underlying causes could be nullified or eliminated, many diseases would be controllable and large numbers of people freed from their crippling effects upon health and prosperity.

Since many of the infectious diseases presented in this book are relatively new or little information is known about the causative agent, much of the material has been derived from recent infectious disease journals or other related articles. Other timely information is derived from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, or MedLine Plus. The excellent

Emerging Infections series from the American Society for Microbiology have also provided much of the background material for this book.

This text has been written to accommodate several different groups of students, including but not limited to, upper-level undergraduate or graduate students in biology or medically-related professions, public health students, and persons already working in the healthcare arena. Not all of the information may be useful to every audience but the material (especially some of the immunology and microbiology) is presented for use by those who wish to have a greater understanding of how the microbes function and cause disease and how the human body attempts to remove or minimize the damage. This information may be skipped without losing understanding of the disease itself or its prevention and treatment.

The diseases are divided by type of causative agent: bacteria, viruses, protozoa, or infectious protein. Those chapters which deal with diseases induced by infection with a single organism or group of organisms are organized in a similar fashion: introduction, history, the disease(s), the causative agent(s), the immune response, diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and surveillance. The Major Concepts section presents a brief overview of the most important concepts found in the chapter. The Summary is a thumbnail sketch of the basic information about the microbe and the associated disease. Review Questions help students to test their knowledge of the material, while Topics for Further Discussion allow for a wider conversation of the implications of the disease and challenge students to “think outside of the box” to develop new solutions. There are no right answers or solutions to the material found within this section; rather, it is hoped that any students entering into the medical or research fields, as well as those destined to serve in public health, may learn to search for innovative ways of dealing with health-related problems.

The two introductory chapters provide basic information that will be useful for the other chapters, including an introduction to emerging and reemerging infectious diseases, proposed causes for disease emergence, very basic microbiology, and very basic immunology. The latter is included since a discussion of disease needs to include how the host attempts to defend itself as well as what can go wrong with this “protective” response. The last two chapters cover topics of particular interest. Chapter Twenty-Nine discusses emerging diseases in immunocompromised individuals since the numbers of people in this group are increasing rapidly, posing unique challenges to public health. Chapter Thirty describes several of the agents that may be used in acts of bioterrorism. Many of these agents have already been used for this purpose. Hopefully, the spread of knowledge about the threat of bioterrorism will discourage its usage in the future.

THE AUTHOR

DR. LISA A. BELTZ is an assistant professor in the Department of Biology at Kent State University at Tuscarawas, in New Philadelphia, Ohio. She has taught a number of medically-related biology courses during her 14 years of teaching at Kent State University and the University of Northern Iowa. Prior to teaching, she studied two of the diseases described in this book. While a graduate student at Michigan State University, she examined the mechanisms by which *Trypanosoma cruzi* inhibits human immune responses, allowing the parasite to kill large numbers of people in Central and South America. Later, at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Pittsburgh, she studied interactions between the simian and human immunodeficiency viruses and bone marrow cells as well as exploring the mechanisms by which HIV kills white blood cells. Dr. Beltz was the co-originator of the course Cancer and Emerging Infectious Diseases during her time in Iowa. The need for a college-level textbook in this field became apparent over her seven years of teaching the course. Dr. Beltz's more recent research has involved studying the impact of nitrate and other environmental contaminants on the human immune system and studying the effects of green tea components upon normal and cancerous white blood cells.

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—*L.A.B.*

CONTENTS

Tables and Figures vii

Preface xv

The Author xvii

Acknowledgments xviii

Part 1: Introduction to Emerging Infectious Diseases

Chapter 1: **Infectious Diseases Past and Present** 3

Major Concepts 4 • History of Infectious Diseases 5 • The Role of Infectious Diseases in the World Today 8 • The Links Between Infectious Diseases, Poverty, and Civil Unrest 10 • Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases 12 • Factors Contributing to the Emergence of New Infectious Diseases and the Spread and Evolution of Older Diseases 15 • Timeline 18

Chapter 2: **Of Microbes and Men** 27

Major Concepts 28 • Introduction 30 • Infectious Agents: The Enemy Combatants 30 • Genetic Information and the Making of Proteins: Preparing the Armament 36 • The Immune Response: Humans Fight Back, Part One 40 • Antimicrobial Agents: Humans Fight Back, Part Two 46

Part 2: Bacterial Infections

Chapter 3: **Lyme Disease** 55

Major Concepts 56 • Introduction 58 • History 60 • The Disease 61 • The Causative Agent 63 • The Immune Response 66 • Diagnosis 67 • Treatment 68 • Prevention 69 • Surveillance 71

Chapter 4: **Human Ehrlichiosis** 75

Major Concepts 76 • Introduction 77 • History 78 • The Diseases 79 • The Causative Agents 88 • The Immune Response 89 • Diagnosis 90 • Treatment 91 • Prevention 92 • Surveillance 92

Chapter 5: *Bartonella* Infections 97

Major Concepts 98 • Introduction 99 • History 99 • The Diseases 101
• The Causative Agents 106 • The Immune Response 109
• Diagnosis 110 • Treatment 111 • Prevention 111 • Surveillance 112

Chapter 6: Group A Streptococci 117

Major Concepts 118 • Introduction 119 • History 120 • The Diseases 121
• The Causative Agents 127 • The Immune Response 131
• Diagnosis 132 • Treatment 133 • Prevention 134 • Surveillance 135

Chapter 7: *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 139

Major Concepts 140 • Introduction 141 • History 142 • The Diseases 143
• The Causative Agents 145 • The Immune Response 151
• Diagnosis 152 • Treatment 153 • Prevention 153 • Surveillance 155

Chapter 8: *Helicobacter pylori*, Ulcers, and Cancer 161

Major Concepts 162 • Introduction 163 • History 164 • The Diseases 165
• The Causative Agent 168 • The Immune Response 171
• Diagnosis 172 • Treatment 173 • Prevention 174 • Surveillance 175

Chapter 9: Legionnaires' Disease and Pontiac Fever 181

Major Concepts 182 • Introduction 183 • History 184 • The Diseases 185
• The Causative Agent 186 • The Immune Response 191
• Diagnosis 194 • Treatment 197 • Prevention 197 • Surveillance 199

Chapter 10: Pulmonary Tuberculosis and Multidrug Resistance 205

Major Concepts 206 • Introduction 207 • History 208 • The Disease 209
• The Causative Agents 212 • The Immune Response 213 • Detection
and Diagnosis 214 • Treatment and Drug Resistance 216 • Prevention 219
• Surveillance 220

Chapter 11: Emerging Bacterial Drug Resistance 225

Major Concepts 226 • Introduction 227 • History 228 • The Diseases, Causative
Agents, and Treatment Options 229 • Mechanisms of
Resistance 235 • Diagnosis 239 • Prevention 240 • Surveillance 240

Part 3: Viral Infections**Chapter 12: Marburg and Ebola Hemorrhagic Fevers** 247

Major Concepts 248 • Introduction 249 • History 250 • The Diseases 254
• The Causative Agents 257 • The Immune Response 262 • Diagnosis 263
• Treatment 264 • Prevention 264 • Surveillance 267

Chapter 13: American Hemorrhagic Fevers 273

Major Concepts 274 • Introduction 275 • History 277 • The Diseases 278
• The Causative Agents 282 • The Immune Response 285 • Diagnosis 286
• Treatment 287 • Prevention 287 • Surveillance 288

Chapter 14: Lassa Hemorrhagic Fever 293

Major Concepts 294 • Introduction 295 • History 296 • The Disease 298
• The Causative Agent 300 • The Immune Response 303 • Diagnosis 304
• Treatment 304 • Prevention 306 • Surveillance 308

Chapter 15: Dengue Fever and Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever 313

Major Concepts 314 • Introduction 315 • History 316 • The Diseases 318
• The Causative Agent 321 • The Immune Response 324 • Diagnosis 327
• Treatment 327 • Prevention 328 • Surveillance 329

Chapter 16: The Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome 335

Major Concepts 336 • Introduction 338 • History 339 • The Diseases 341
• The Causative Agent 344 • The Immune Response 350 • Diagnosis and
Detection 355 • Treatment 355 • Prevention 357 • Surveillance 358

Chapter 17: Human Herpesvirus 8 and Kaposi's Sarcoma 365

Major Concepts 366 • Introduction 367 • History 368 • The Diseases 368
• The Causative Agent 373 • The Immune Response 378 • Diagnosis 379
• Treatment 380 • Prevention 383 • Surveillance 383

Chapter 18: Hepatitis C 389

Major Concepts 390 • Introduction 391 • History 392 • The Diseases 392
• The Causative Agent 397 • The Immune Response 399 • Diagnosis 401
• Treatment 402 • Prevention 403 • Surveillance 404

Chapter 19: Epidemic and Pandemic Influenza 409

Major Concepts 410 • Introduction 411 • History 412 • The Disease 414
• The Causative Agent 415 • The Immune Response 421 • Diagnosis 421
• Treatment 422 • Prevention 422 • Surveillance 425

Chapter 20: Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome 431

Major Concepts 432 • Introduction 433 • History 435 • The Diseases 435
• The Causative Agents 439 • The Immune Response 444 • Diagnosis 445
• Treatment 446 • Prevention 447 • Surveillance 450

Chapter 21: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome 455

Major Concepts 456 • Introduction 457 • History 457 • The Disease 460
• The Causative Agent 461 • The Immune Response 464 • Diagnosis 465
• Treatment 466 • Prevention 467 • Surveillance 469

Chapter 22: West Nile Disease in the United States 475

Major Concepts 476 • Introduction 477 • History 477 • The Diseases 481
• The Causative Agent 484 • The Immune Response 487 • Diagnosis 488
• Treatment 489 • Prevention 490 • Surveillance 493

Chapter 23: Monkeypox 499

Major Concepts 500 • Introduction 501 • History 502 • The Disease 505
• The Causative Agent 508 • The Immune Response 511 • Diagnosis 513
• Treatment 514 • Prevention 514 • Surveillance 516

Part 4: Parasitic Infections

Chapter 24: **Malaria: Reemergence and Recent Successes** 523

Major Concepts 524 • Introduction 526 • History 526 • The Disease 528 • The Causative Agents 529 • The Immune Response 533 • Diagnosis 535 • Treatment and Drug Resistance 535 • Prevention: Failures and Successes 537 • Surveillance 541

Chapter 25: **Babesiosis** 547

Major Concepts 548 • Introduction 549 • History 549 • The Disease 550 • The Causative Agent 553 • The Immune Response 557 • Diagnosis 558 • Treatment 558 • Prevention 560 • Surveillance 560

Chapter 26: **Cryptosporidiosis** 565

Major Concepts 566 • Introduction 567 • History 568 • The Disease 569 • The Causative Agents 570 • The Immune Response 576 • Diagnosis 577 • Treatment 578 • Prevention 580 • Surveillance 581

Chapter 27: **Chagas' Disease and Its Emergence in the United States** 585

Major Concepts 586 • Introduction 587 • History 587 • The Disease 588 • The Causative Agent 591 • The Immune Response 595 • Diagnosis 598 • Treatment 599 • Prevention 600 • Surveillance 601

Part 5: Infectious Proteins

Chapter 28: **Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease and Other Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies** 609

Major Concepts 610 • Introduction 611 • History 612 • The Diseases 613 • The Causative Agents 621 • The Immune Response 625 • Diagnosis 626 • Treatment 627 • Prevention 628 • Surveillance 628

Part 6: Special Issues in Infectious Diseases

Chapter 29: **The Emerging Importance of Infectious Diseases in the Immunosuppressed** 635

Major Concepts 636 • Introduction 637 • Immunosuppressed Populations 637 • Selected Causes of Immunosuppression 638 • Infectious Diseases of the Immunosuppressed 642

Chapter 30: **The Emerging Threat of Bioweapons** 667

Major Concepts 668 • Introduction 669 • History 670 • Bioterrorism Agents and Diseases 671 • The Threat of Agroterrorism 692 • Preparation for Biological Attacks 693 • Protective Vaccines 694

Glossary 701

Index 723

TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

Table 2.1	Immune cells and immune responses	41
Table 2.2	Actions of selected cytokines	46
Table 3.1	Incidence of Lyme disease by state	59
Table 5.1	Human diseases caused by <i>Bartonella</i> species	102
Table 5.2	<i>Bartonella</i> species that infect humans	106
Table 5.3	Treatment for diseases associated with <i>Bartonella</i> infection	111
Table 6.1	Diseases associated with GAS infection	121
Table 6.2	Actions of streptococcal virulence factors	129
Table 6.3	GAS and the human immune response	132
Table 7.1	Diseases associated with <i>E. coli</i> O157:H7 infection	144
Table 7.2	Routes of transmission of <i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	148
Table 7.3	<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7 virulence genes	151
Table 8.1	<i>Helicobacter</i> species associated with human disease	169
Table 8.2	<i>H. pylori</i> -induced changes in production of cytokines and chemokines	172
Table 8.3	Agents used in combination for the treatment of <i>H. pylori</i> infection	174
Table 9.1	Diagnostic techniques for Legionnaires' disease	196
Table 9.2	Water treatment options to decrease <i>Legionella</i> contamination	199
Table 11.1	Mechanisms of antibiotic drug action	236
Table 13.1	Cytokines active during New World hemorrhagic fevers	286
Table 15.1	Factors influencing the development of DHF and DSS	320
Table 15.2	Roles of immune mediators in dengue infection	325
Table 15.3	Roles of leukocytes in dengue infection	326
Table 16.1	HIV transmission	338
Table 16.2	Total number of AIDS cases in nine U.S. states and Puerto Rico through 2007	339
Table 16.3	Viral and immunological characteristics during different stages of HIV infection	353
Table 16.4	Categories of anti-HIV agents	356
Table 17.1	Types of Kaposi's sarcoma	369

Table 17.2	HHV-8 proteins that increase viral growth or survival	378
Table 19.1	Incidence and mortality: Human cases of avian influenza, 2003–January 2008	420
Table 20.1	Distinguishing clinical characteristics for HFRS and HPS	436
Table 20.2	Pathogenic members of the genus <i>Hantavirus</i> , family Bunyaviridae	440
Table 20.3	Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome in the Americas, 1993–2004	442
Table 21.1	Summary of probable SARS cases, November 1, 2002–July 31, 2003	459
Table 21.2	Graded implementation of community containment measures	468
Table 22.1	West Nile disease in the United States, 2008	483
Table 25.1	Tickborne diseases of humans	552
Table 25.2	<i>Babesia</i> species and their hosts	553
Table 26.1	Several Apicomplexan parasites of humans	571
Table 26.2	Immune system components activated by <i>Cryptosporidium</i> infection	576
Table 28.1	Infectious agents of humans	612
Table 28.2	Differences between sporadic and variant CJD	616
Table 29.1	Some factors that inhibit immune system functioning	642
Table 30.1	Categories of potential biological weapons agents	670
Table 30.2	Agents of viral hemorrhagic fever	686
Table 30.3	Distribution of the viruses that cause hemorrhagic fever (HF)	686
Table 30.4	Agents of viral encephalitis in humans	689

Figures

Figure 1.1	Child with smallpox	6
Figure 1.2	Sign announcing smallpox vaccination	7
Figure 1.3	Incidence of diabetes in the United States	9
Figure 2.1	Yellow fever virus	32
Figure 2.2	Transmission via respiratory secretions	35
Figure 3.1	Annual incidence of reported cases of Lyme disease in the United States, by age group and sex, 1992–2004	60
Figure 3.2	Reported cases of Lyme disease in the United States, 1994–2008	61
Figure 3.3	Erythema migrans	62
Figure 3.4	Spirochete	64

- Figure 3.5 Nymphal *Amblyomma americanum* (lone star tick) and engorged tick 65
- Figure 3.6 Approved method of tick removal 70
- Figure 4.1 Range of one of the principal tick vectors in the United States 78
- Figure 4.2 Lone star tick 81
- Figure 4.3 Number of ehrlichiosis cases in the United States, 1999–2006 82
- Figure 4.4 Ehrlichiosis by state, 2001–2002 83
- Figure 4.5 Black-legged tick 85
- Figure 4.6 Anaplasmosis cases in the United States, 1999–2006 85
- Figure 4.7 Anaplasmosis by state, 2001–2002 86
- Figure 5.1 Small, localized lesion of cat-scratch disease 103
- Figure 5.2 Human body louse 108
- Figure 6.1 Skin lesions due to impetigo 122
- Figure 6.2 “Strawberry tongue” 123
- Figure 6.3 Erysipelas 124
- Figure 6.4 Group A streptococci growing in chains 128
- Figure 6.5 Beta-hemolytic growth: ring of clearing around colonies grown on agar containing sheep red blood cells 133
- Figure 7.1 Scanning electron micrograph of *E. coli* O157:H7 145
- Figure 7.2 Inoculation of bacteria from a fecal sample onto an agar plate for isolation 153
- Figure 8.1 Gastric cancer 166
- Figure 9.1 Bilateral pulmonary infiltrates during Legionnaires’ disease 186
- Figure 9.2 *Legionella pneumophila* bacilli 187
- Figure 9.3 Scanning electron micrograph demonstrating the association of *Hartmannella vermiformis* amoebas with *Legionella pneumophila* on a potable water biofilm containing *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, and *Flavobacterium* 188
- Figure 9.4 The life cycle of *Legionella* 192
- Figure 9.5 Colony isolation on buffered charcoal-yeast extract (BCYE) agar 195
- Figure 9.6 Fluorescent antibody staining to detect the presence of *L. pneumophila* 196
- Figure 10.1 Advanced bilateral tuberculosis 211
- Figure 10.2 *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* 212
- Figure 10.3 *M. tuberculosis* with acid-fast stain 213
- Figure 10.4 Mobile tuberculosis testing clinic, 1963 215
- Figure 10.5 Measuring the extent of the hypersensitivity reaction during a Mantoux tuberculin skin test 215

- Figure 11.1 MRSA 230
- Figure 11.2 Cutaneous lesion due to MRSA infection 232
- Figure 11.3 Electron micrograph of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* 234
- Figure 11.4 Measuring antibiotic resistance: A clearance zone appears around bacteria susceptible to antibiotics on the disks 239
- Figure 12.1 Surveying for infection during the 1976 Ebola outbreak in Zaire 252
- Figure 12.2 Graveyard containing some of the first victims of the Ebola outbreak in Sudan in 1976 253
- Figure 12.3 Lung pathology due to Marburg virus infection, showing breakdown of alveolar walls, leading to pulmonary edema 255
- Figure 12.4 Acute tubular necrosis and glomerular fibrin thrombosis in the kidney of a patient with Marburg hemorrhagic fever 256
- Figure 12.5 Histology of liver tissue infected with Ebola virus 257
- Figure 12.6 Electron micrographs of Ebola and Marburg viruses 258
- Figure 12.7 Budding of Ebola virus from the plasma membrane of an infected cell 261
- Figure 12.8 Sampling animal tissues to determine the reservoir species for Ebola virus, Kikwit, Zaire, 1995 262
- Figure 12.9 Isolation unit harboring persons with suspected cases of Ebola hemorrhagic fever in 1976 265
- Figure 12.10 Technician in protective field gear, Zaire, 1976 266
- Figure 12.11 Barrier clothing donned prior to entering an Ebola isolation ward, Kikwit, Zaire, 1995 266
- Figure 12.12 Vehicles used to cross the rugged roads of Zaire during the 1976 Ebola outbreak 268
- Figure 13.1 Petechial lesions 278
- Figure 13.2 Cotton rat 281
- Figure 13.3 “Sandy” appearance of New World arenaviruses 283
- Figure 13.4 Machupo virus 283
- Figure 13.5 Working in a Biosafety Level 4 laboratory 284
- Figure 13.6 Baiting a rodent trap with peanut butter 288
- Figure 14.1 Lassa witch doctors 296
- Figure 14.2 Serum from a nurse who contracted Lassa fever in Nigeria, 1969 297
- Figure 14.3 Treating a child with Lassa fever in Sierra Leone 298
- Figure 14.4 Hepatitis caused by Lassa virus 300
- Figure 14.5 Budding of Lassa viruses from an infected host cell 302
- Figure 14.6 Receiving plasma to maintain blood volume during Lassa fever 305

- Figure 14.7 Barrier nursing in a men's Lassa fever ward in Sierra Leone, 1977 307
- Figure 14.8 Viewing tissue samples during a Lassa fever investigation 309
- Figure 15.1 Female *Aedes aegypti* taking a blood meal 318
- Figure 15.2 Cemetery in New Orleans serving as an urban breeding site for *A. aegypti* 323
- Figure 15.3 Testing water from a tree hole for the presence of mosquito larvae 330
- Figure 16.1 Chemical structure of AZT (zidovudine) 340
- Figure 16.2 *Candida* infection in the mouth of an HIV-positive person 342
- Figure 16.3 *Toxoplasma* infection of the heart 343
- Figure 16.4 Two human retroviruses that infect T lymphocytes 345
- Figure 16.5 HIV budding from a T helper lymphocyte 348
- Figure 16.6 Multinucleated giant cell formed during HIV infection 352
- Figure 16.7 Proper disposal of a used needle in a "sharps" container 358
- Figure 17.1 Skin lesions of Kaposi's sarcoma 369
- Figure 17.2 Kaposi's sarcoma of the hard palate of an HIV-positive person 372
- Figure 17.3 Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) 380
- Figure 17.4 The chemical structure of Taxol 382
- Figure 18.1 Primary causes of chronic liver disease 393
- Figure 18.2 Cirrhosis of the liver 394
- Figure 18.3 Lichen planus 396
- Figure 18.4 Electron micrograph of hepatitis viruses 397
- Figure 18.5 The chemical structure of ribavirin 402
- Figure 18.6 Disposing of blood-contaminated material 404
- Figure 19.1 Annual mortality rate during recent influenza pandemics 412
- Figure 19.2 Boxes of "swine flu" vaccine, stored in connection with the National Influenza Immunization Program 414
- Figure 19.3 H3N2 "Hong Kong flu" virus showing spikes of hemagglutinin and neuraminidase on the surface 416
- Figure 19.4 Inoculating a chick embryo with influenza virus during vaccine preparation 423
- Figure 19.5 Administration of a live attenuated intranasal H1N1 vaccine 424
- Figure 20.1 Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) cases, by reporting states 434
- Figure 20.2 Bilateral pulmonary effusion during HPS 438
- Figure 20.3 Interstitial pneumonitis and intra-alveolar edema 439
- Figure 20.4 Electron micrograph of the Sin Nombre virus 441
- Figure 20.5 Deer mouse vector of the Sin Nombre virus 443