
CURRENT THERAPY IN

INFECTIOUS DISEASE - 2

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1986

B.C. DECKER INC • Toronto • Philadelphia
The C.V. MOSBY COMPANY • Saint Louis • Toronto • London

Publisher

B.C. Decker Inc.
3228 South Service Road
Burlington, Ontario L7N 3H8

B.C. Decker Inc.
P.O. Box 30246
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

Sales and Distribution

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and Possessions

The C.V. Mosby Company
11830 Westline Industrial Drive
Saint Louis, Missouri 63146

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The C.V. Mosby Company, Ltd.
5240 Finch Avenue East, Unit No. 1
Scarborough, Ontario M1S 4P2

United Kingdom, Europe
and the Middle East

Blackwell Scientific Publications, Ltd.
Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 OEL, England

Australia

Holt-Saunders Pty. Limited
9 Waltham Street
Artarmon, N.S.W. 2064
Australia

Japan

Igaku-Shoin Ltd.
Tokyo International P.O. Box 5063
1-28-36 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113, Japan

Asia

Holt-Saunders Asia Limited
10/F, Inter-Continental Plaza
Tsim Sha Tsui East
Kowloon, Hong Kong

Current Therapy in Infectious Disease - 2

ISBN 0-941158-46-2

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Library of Congress catalog card number: 85-062981

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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PREFACE

The kind reception accorded the original volume, *Current Therapy in Infectious Disease* prompted the preparation of this new volume. The present work is radically changed from the preceding one. Virtually all of the authors are different, not because of inadequacies of their predecessors, but rather to bring to our readers a wider range of viewpoints on the complexities of management of infectious disease. New topics have been added, some combined, and others reorganized.

We have, however, maintained the basic thrust of the earlier volume by insisting, wherever it was appropriate, that the authors eschew the common practice of using permissive and occasionally ambiguous recommendations. Instead, we asked them to tell us *what they do* in the specific circumstances under discussion. This principle was outlined in the preface to the previous volume, from which we now quote liberally.

Many, if not most, textbooks and manuals are written by experts and try to earn the approbation of fellow experts in the field. Since some disagreement within a field is necessary and reasonable, recommendations for treatment usually contain wide ranges of dosages and broadly permissive statements, such as, "may sometimes be helpful" or "is often recommended." For the busy practitioner, who cannot take the time to thread through all the details of current controversy or uncertainty, such distressingly common statements are perplexing in the least and frustrating in the extreme. If to this problem is added the contemporary one of the new antimicrobial drugs that are appearing on the market with staggering frequency, difficult problems of choice and awareness are posed. In addition, given that each new product is usually marketed forcefully and convincingly by its respective purveyors, the plight of the practitioner is further compounded.

It seems reasonable, therefore, to assemble a volume on treatment and prevention of infectious disease that attempts to cut through the problems of choice and of consensus by adhering to two simple principles. The first is that experts in their respective fields would be asked to state what they did when faced with a patient with the disease under discussion. Second, the recommendations would be given in straightforward terms, especially when dosages, routes, difficulties, and reasons for a given choice were concerned. If there were acceptable alternatives, these were to be stated in order of preference. Where there were disagreements, these could be mentioned, but only in relation to a statement of the author's preference.

Therefore, this is a manual intended for the busy practitioner. It gives only enough diagnostic information to offer a rational framework for treatment. It is our hope that future editions will offer recommendations from different experts, thereby reflecting occasional differences of approach.

We are most appreciative of the helpful suggestions that we have received; we have tried to respond to as many of them as possible. We hope that the present effort will elicit constructive comments from our readers. We have tried to make the presentations succinct, and in so doing have sometimes edited the individual contributions. Errors and misinterpretations in the presentations are ours, but we shall be ready to amend and to add to these topics in response to our readers.

We are particularly grateful to the contributors who have provided their expert views on the various topics that are presented; they have put up with our queries and editorial comments with good humor and constructive response. Because most of them are members of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, we have, as in the past, attempted to express our appreciation by contributing to the Lectureship Fund of the IDSA, from the royalties of these volumes. However, the Society has no official involvement with this work, has neither approved nor disapproved of it, and is in no way responsible for any of the opinions and judgments expressed.

Our particular gratitude goes to Joan Daniels for her perceptive contributions to this volume, to Julie McIntyre Curran for her helpful assistance in ways too numerous to mention, and to the publisher, Brian Decker, for his many valuable suggestions.

Edward H. Kass
Richard Platt
December, 1985

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