

Clinical and Diagnostic Virology

G. Kudeia, T. Wreghitt. Cambridge: University Press, 2009
ISBN 9780521694674 (paperback). £29.99 (US\$60.00). 265 pp

The authors state in the preface that the book is aimed at "trainee doctors, healthcare scientists, infection control nurses and other healthcare workers". This 265-page book is divided into five sections covering very introductory information on specific viruses (using familiar names such as rhinoviruses, rotavirus etc). Section 2 includes *Toxoplasma* and *Chlamydia* and prions. Section 3 comprises 15 chapters on clinical syndromes (atypical pneumonia, viral malignancies etc). Section 4 covers diagnostic techniques (sending specimens to the laboratory, serological techniques etc) and finally Section 5 covers antivirals, vaccines, infection control and occupational health.

Most chapters are three to five sides long, written in a brief summary style, typical of the 'Notes' format that has proliferated in recent years. Consequently, it is difficult to see this book as anything other than an *aide-mémoire* for non-experts. Quite what such an audience will make of the single-sentence descriptions of laboratory techniques needs to be determined and, perhaps, for others to comment, but,

for example, describing *Toxoplasma* as a "coccidial parasite" is probably of limited value.

If non-specialists are to benefit from the book then common synonyms of some of the virus diseases would have been appropriate. As an example, terms like 'roseola' and 'erythema subitum' could have been included to help guide the reader to the appropriate virus. No help is provided if you are not clear on the difference between rotavirus, norovirus and winter vomiting disease – all of which are likely to be in current usage on wards, in tea rooms and newspapers.

If 'healthcare scientists' includes biomedical scientists then I would doubt the value of this book to such an audience. Readers of this journal will find the book too elementary to be a laboratory guide, but it may be useful as a summary of salient points about human virus disease (and *Chlamydia* and *Toxoplasma*), otherwise, the authors cannot decide to whom the book is aimed.

S. Hardy

Nutrition and Laboratory Medicine

R. Ayling, W. Marshall. London: ACB Venture Publications, 2007
ISBN: 978-0-902429-44-4. £30. 212 pp

The importance of nutrition for the maintenance of growth, development, good health and wellbeing has been recognised for a long time. Malnutrition is still to be found in many parts of the world and, in Western societies, is found mainly in the elderly or bedridden. Diseases, such as scurvy, caused by single nutrient deficiencies have been recognised for centuries but the precise mechanisms of action of many vitamins and nutrients have only been elucidated with the advancement of chemistry, biochemistry and physiology.

Moreover, since the Second World War, nutrition has played an increasing role in the prevention of disease and mortality. For example, a diet low in saturated fats and cholesterol may help to prevent cardiovascular disease, and there is good evidence that many of the diseases affecting people living in Western societies may be due to obesity.

Laboratory medicine, particularly blood science (haematology and clinical chemistry) has played a central role in the investigation of many of the nutritional disorders, mainly by measuring and assessing the biomarkers that indicate a particular disease state such as anaemia. This small book by Ruth Ayling and William Marshall provides the

healthcare scientist with a useful insight into the relevance of nutrition to laboratory medicine. It is clearly written with the chapters following in a logical sequence.

The first chapter introduces the reader to the role of clinical nutrition in modern medicine, and is followed by two chapters giving a description of the major nutrients, together with an outline of their mechanisms of action and their physiology. The methods used to assess nutrition are described in Chapter 4 and, importantly, include physiological techniques such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) as well as more familiar laboratory procedures. Then follows a chapter on nutritional support which describes how compromised nutrition is managed in a hospital situation. There is a full chapter on obesity and a final chapter on disease-specific nutritional conditions.

More healthcare scientists should develop an interest in nutrition and this book provides a useful starting point for those who wish to do so. It is up to date, covers the basic science and gives an account of techniques of nutritional assessment that the laboratory scientist may find less familiar.

W. Gilmore