Exposure: A Guide to Sources of Infections

By Dieter A. Stürchler


Exposure: A Guide to Sources of Infections is a comprehensive book with a focus on epidemiological considerations of the acquisition of human infectious diseases. The author is Dr. Dieter A. Stürchler from the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine at University of Basel in Switzerland and from Stürchler Epidemiologists in Büren, Switzerland, and the book includes contributions from his 3 children, Dr. Matius P. Stürchler, Dr. Marjam Rüdiger-Stürchler, and Dr. Nikolas J. Stürchler.

As stated in the introduction, exposure is the critical first step in infection. This book, with a unique focus on infections, is organized by sections on the basis of routes of exposure to infection, including animals, environment, food, humans, travel and transportation, and nosocomial infection, with an additional compendium of agents of human infections. The appendices include an exposure checklist and a list of acronyms. The scope of the book is epidemiologic, rather than clinical, and it has extensive references, citing 8430 papers. The book will be of interest to general medical clinicians, infectious diseases specialists, travel clinic managers, clinical and environmental microbiologists, and public health professionals.

Strengths of the book include its detailed information on the exposures that lead to infections in humans, as well as the extensive references that result in an evidence-based treatise. The epidemiologic graphs are useful and reasonably up to date.

Because of the comprehensive nature of the book and its methodical organization, information may be repetitive and redundant. For example, information on hepatitis A virus is found in the section on food (e.g., animal-derived milk and dairy products; finished foods, such as snacks and sandwiches; and drinking water, including bottled water and ice), in the section on environment (e.g., human-made environments, such as dams and irrigation, and natural environments, such as freshwater habitats and flooded areas), in the section on humans (e.g., human work, including catering, military, police, and guards; human community, such as agents from the bowel, community acquired syndromes, schools, and training; human domiciles, including substandard domiciles and hotel accommodations; and human leisure and lifestyle, including sports and hobbies, injection drug use, and swimming pools and spas), and in the section on travel and transportation (e.g., transported animals and goods, such as transported goods, and human travel, such as international short-term travel) to name a few. The excellent index and the summary boxes outlining agents from various sources per exposure type (i.e., droplet, feces-food, zoonotic, and skin-blood) assist the reader in navigating this morass of information.

If the reader seeks to identify infections associated with lettuce, chicken, or spinach, the index will not be useful. Cheese, breast milk, soft drinks, and spices are, however, listed. Infections transmitted by donkeys, rabbit meat, and clothes can be found using the index; those transmitted by snakes, turtles, or turkey meat are not.

Weaknesses include the listing of the references at the beginning of each subsection, rather than after the relevant facts. In addition, several obvious topics, such as needle exposure, tattoo-associated infections, herpes B virus, and bioterrorism or intentional exposures are not included in the index and, apparently, not discussed in the book. Although bedbugs are indexed, they are not included in the “Hotel” section but are included in the “Transported Invertebrates” section. Thus, apparently, they are listed only as vectors and not as infestations. On the other hand, scabies is listed as both an infestation and as a vector.

In summary, although comprehensive, this book is somewhat awkward in its organization and somewhat inconsistent in its presentation. It will, however, be a useful addition to the library of individuals seeking detailed, well-referenced information on methods of exposure to a wide, nearly inclusive list of human infections.

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Pathogenesis of Human Pulmonary Tuberculosis: Insights from the Rabbit Model

By Arthur M. Dannenberg, Jr.


This monograph is a compendium of observations and data from ~70 years of research by the author and his mentor, Dr. Max Lurie. It is a publication of important historical significance to the field of tuberculosis (TB). As defined in the title, the presentation is highly focused on previously described rabbit model studies of TB.