

Infection in the Immunocompromised Host

By Simon Fox, Brian Angus, Angela Minassian and Thomas Rawlinson.
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Book Review

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This 'pocket sized' book summarizes the types of infections that can occur in the immunocompromised host. It has 12 chapters, divided into three sections, and has a concise, almost 'flash card' approach to giving relevant information. The first section gives a brief recap of the host's immune system and would serve as a reminder of immunological terms. The second section deals with the clinical importance of being immunocompromised and I like how it is divided into sections on a particular topic, e.g. infections in solid organ transplant patients. The third section gives information on the types of infections, i.e. viral, parasite, fungal and bacterial infections, that occur in patients. The information given covers clinical features, diagnosis, drugs used in management, side effects, prevention and vaccinations. It has a chapter on immunosuppressive drugs and gives their mode of action. There is a cross-reference in the book to show where related information can be obtained, information on useful web-sites and references to further material on a topic. It also has some nice pictures to point out the relevant features of clinical conditions. The parasitology section covers 11 different parasitic organisms within one chapter. As this is directed at clinicians, there is very little information on the specific parasites covered (e.g. life cycle) but it gives information on how to diagnose infection, the methods used for treatment and on-line sources for up-to-date information on managing suspected cases. Although this book is directed at medical staff treating immunocompromised patients, it would also be a great revision resource for medical students, pharmacists and health professionals in the community.

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