BOOK REVIEW

The Encyclopaedia of Arthropod-transmitted Infections of Man and Domesticated Animals

Edited by M.W. Service – CABI Publishing

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As the title states, this is an encyclopaedia. It starts with aegyptionellosis and finishes 147 entries later with Zika virus. Under a team of five advisers plus the editor, 88 contributors from around the world have written the entries, all authorities in their own fields.

The majority of the entries are descriptions of specific diseases or infections and most conform to a similar format, comprising Distribution, Parasite or Aetiological Agent, Clinical Signs, Diagnosis, Transmission, Vertebrate Hosts, Treatment, Prevention and Control, and Selected Bibliography. Other entries are nine fairly short overviews of groups of vector-transmitted agents (Arboviruses, Bacteria, Nematoda, Protozoa, Rickettsiae, Rickettsiales, Spirochetes, Vibrios, Viruses) and 20 entries on different vectors (Beetles, Biting midges, Black flies, Cimicidae, Cockroaches, Eye flies, Fleas, Flies, Hippoboscids, Horn flies, Horse flies, *Hydrotaea irritans*, Lice, Mites, Mosquitoes, Phlebotomine sand-flies, Stable flies, Ticks, Triatomine bugs and Tsetse flies). The entries on vectors also conform to a certain format, comprising Biology, Diseases, Control and Selected Bibliography.

The large range of diseases, infections, agents and vectors is beyond the scope of any one individual reviewer to comment on in an informed way. However, the entries about which I have some knowledge I found to be accurate, concise, up-to-date and presented in a 'user-friendly' style; those entries of which I have little or no knowledge I found easy to read and digest the contents. The entries on agents are very basic, however, and add little to the overall usefulness of the book; the impression is gained that these were included to achieve a required level of completeness. Some of the entries are supported by black and white photographs, illustrations and tables.

Unfortunately, apart from a very useful list of the abbreviations used in the text, there is no index or table of entries, and this is undoubtedly the main weakness of the book. The publisher probably decided that for a dictionary style with entries presented in strict alphabetical order, an index or table of contents was unnecessary. As a consequence, apart from forcing the reader to search through the book for any information, this results in some strange sequences; thus 'Lice' is sandwiched between 'Leucocytozoonosis' and 'Loiasis'.

Apart from these minor criticisms, this is an excellent publication and the editor and advisers are to be congratulated on what must have been a Herculean task of bringing together the large range of entries from so many contributors and ensuring that their presentations conformed to the same format and practical style of information delivery. In reviewing the book, I found myself referring to it on a number of occasions for information I required for some presentations of my own, and I definitely now regard my copy as one of my more useful information sources. The book will become essential reading for students and lecturers of medical and veterinary parasitology as well as for medical and veterinary practitioners and entomologists involved in the control of vector-transmitted infections. Cutting-edge scientists, however, will find that the information is not at a level of sufficient depth for their needs, but then I suspect the book has not been published with them in mind. Vector-transmitted infections are dynamic and constantly changing, and a second edition will probably be necessary in a few years' time.

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