

Immunology of Infection

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Immunology of Infection

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Series Editor's Note

The interface between clinical immunology and other branches of medical practice is frequently blurred and the general physician is often faced with clinical problems with an immunological basis and is expected to diagnose and manage such patients. The rapid expansion of basic and clinical immunology over the past two decades has resulted in the appearance of increasing numbers of immunology journals and it is impossible for a non-specialist to keep apace with this information overload. The *Immunology and Medicine* series is designed to present individual topics of immunology in a condensed package of information which can be readily assimilated by the busy clinician or pathologist.

*K. Whaley, Leicester
May 1994*

Preface

The immune system has evolved in large part to enable organisms to resist microbial infection. Given this very fundamental relationship between the immune system and infectious microbial agents it is entirely appropriate that a volume in this series should be devoted to the immunology of infection. Microorganisms have long been used as experimental tools by immunologists, and the study of the immune response to viruses and bacteria has contributed much to our understanding of basic immunological mechanisms (for example of the mechanism by which non-self determinants on cells are recognized). However there are of course important practical and clinical reasons for attempting to understand the immunology of infections – these include the needs for rational design of vaccines and to understand the pathogenesis of human infectious diseases.

The last decade or so has seen a resurgence of interest in infectious diseases and a recognition that they remain of importance and pertinence to all areas of medicine. This is not just because of the advent of AIDS, although that has been a major factor – the rise in drug-resistant mycobacterial infections and the recognition of the infectious aetiology of peptic ulcer disease are other illustrations.

It should be made clear that this volume deals with aspects of the immunology of bacteria, viruses and fungi – but it does not deal with parasite immunology which it is planned to cover in a separate volume in the series. The emphasis is in general on human infection with reference to experimental models where appropriate. There is no attempt to deal comprehensively with individual infectious diseases, but rather with the principles involved in the immunology of the different classes of infectious agent.

The contributors are all chosen for their active involvement and expertise in the fields on which they write.

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