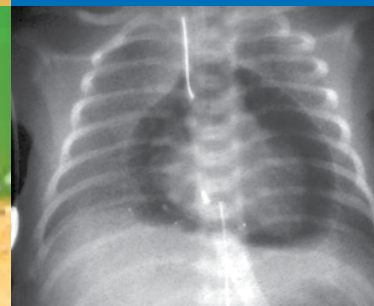




Update on Tropical Fever

Update on Tropical Fever



Dr Ashish Bhalla



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Foreword

I am indeed delighted to know that a book on some of the important Tropical diseases is on the anvil. I congratulate Dr. Ashish Bhalla and other authors for bringing out an update on these diseases, which we have been trying to control without much success. Though named as tropical diseases because of their unique prevalence in the tropical and subtropical regions, they are no longer confined to these latitudes. The climatic changes, deforestation, immigration, urbanization and the ease of International travel have helped their percolation into the raw temperate areas. Many of these diseases are vector borne. Earlier due to low temperature in these regions the vectors would either not survive or hibernate but today due to the green house effect and change in the ecology, these insects are able to not only survive but even thrive and contribute toward the diseases acquiring epidemic proportions.

Towards the beginning of 1980s, thanks to the available antibiotics and vaccines, we all came to believe that we had harnessed the microbes, only to be soon disillusioned by the sudden appearance of many newly emerging infections like the HIV, SARS, Avian Flu, Ebola, Marburg and other types of fevers and encephalitis caused by Arbo viruses that originated mainly in countries situated in the tropics and then acquired epidemic potential. Dengue and Chikungunya, categorized under neglected tropical diseases(LTD) by WHO are conditions which many tropical countries are struggling to control. Old diseases of the tropics like Malaria, Kala-Azar, Tuberculosis, and Leprosy have staged a mutational comeback, better armed with weapons like drug resistance. Even the Rickettsial diseases and scrub typhus have been reported from yet unknown geographical areas especially in India and South East Asia.

No doubt we have had some success stories. The eradication of smallpox and now near elimination of polio can give us much to feel satisfied about but we cannot afford to be complacent. The microbes have already demonstrated their capabilities. The specialty of tropical medicine therefore has to broaden its scope and update itself in order to meet the challenges ahead. The diseases have crossed their geographical borders, therefore, knowledge needs to be disseminated. Research and training in tropical diseases is an important WHO program to foster effective global research in these diseases. New drugs and treatment modalities have come up. Public Health measures and training are necessary to ensure preparedness for all eventualities and outbreaks. We have done well in the recent past in controlling the spread of diseases like SARS and Avian Flu and global efforts to control the deadly Ebola are showing results. Thus publications like this one are a step towards that preparedness because the syndromic approach adopted in this book to understand the diseases having similar clinical presentation will certainly help the clinicians in making quick and correct differential diagnoses without too much dependence on unnecessary investigation.

Students, teachers and public health personnel alike will find this book very useful.

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From the editor's pen

At the outset, I must thank, Dr Pritam Gupta, Dean, Indian College of Physicians, for giving me the opportunity and the responsibility of producing a publication for the Association of Physicians of India. I must acknowledge the President API and the Secretary API who encouraged me to complete this task in time. Dr Dhruva Chaudhary was the guiding force behind this project and provided me constant support.

I must acknowledge all my friends & the authors of this update, without whose contribution, this project would not have seen the light of day. Words are not enough to thank my family and my friends, who stood by my side during this tough time.

I would fail in my duties if I do not acknowledge the efforts of Mr Kamal Bhalla for making the publication of this book a reality.

Finally, I must thank "God" for giving me the strength to turn this dream into a reality.

Hope this book is able to help physicians get "up to date" with common tropical infections and serve as a guide to them for better management of the patients.

Dr. Ashish Bhalla

Dedicated to

My parents (Asha and Satish Bhalla)

My wife (Ritambhra)

&

My children (Anika and Arnav)

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