

Sexually transmitted infections

Bhushan Kumar, Somesh Gupta (Editors)

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Sexually Transmitted Infections edited by Bhushan Kumar and Somesh Gupta is a book of extraordinary merit and magnitude (it was sheer delight to me reading and reviewing this time) and will be a major resource book for years to come to all those dermatologists who are engaged in the teaching and practice of venereology. With decades of experience in the field of sexually transmitted diseases, the senior editor is indeed a recognized authority in this subject and the publication of this work fulfills his long cherished dream of providing a reference book on sexually transmitted infections (STI's) to those working in this part of the world with its special problems. The vigor and enthusiasm of Somesh Gupta (which I had seen personally on my visits to Chandigarh) and his support are no less contributory to the success of this book. It is not incidental that both the editors have been active functionaries of IUSTI.

The encyclopedic text is organized into 15 sections and 100 chapters covering every aspect of STI's and HIV/AIDS. There are 26 chapters (and 263 pages) on HIV infection and AIDS alone. Each chapter is concisely (several, not more than 8-10 pages in length) yet comprehensively written, so much so a practicing dermatologist does not have to look elsewhere. All the chapters are appropriately referenced and several references are current up to 2003 and an occasional one up to 2004. Most of the chapters have been written by people who have first hand clinical knowledge of the subjects they have been asked to write, some of them established authorities in their own field. The first few chapters on epidemiology, chapters on condoms, male circumcision, and the sections on basic and laboratory sciences and human sexuality are a joy to read. The clinical sections are all well written and

convey a wealth of useful information. The needs of a general practitioner and his patients have not been ignored and there is a whole section (comprised of 7 chapters) on the syndromic management of STI's. Readers are also likely to find helpful to their practices, a 22-page write-up that gives insight into the diagnosis and management of different types of sexual dysfunction.

As Nicol Thin has written in the foreword, the editors indeed need to be congratulated for assembling such a wide array of specialists (117 in all) not only from India and neighboring countries but also from Europe, Africa, North America, Far East, Australia and New Zealand. The contributors include (among others) academic and practicing venereologists/genitourinary medicine specialists, internists, gynecologists, psychiatrists, immunologists, microbiologists, pathologists, public health experts and also experts from WHO and World Bank. Even with such widespread authorship, there is really little overlap or repetition or redundancy (except where it seems to have become necessary to give a 'textbook fullness' to a chapter). This speaks of the painstaking efforts of the editors and their editorial scrutiny.

A special merit of the book is the appendices (68 pages), which can be used as a ready reference guide by all practicing physicians. These list the treatment recommendations for all STIs as suggested by CDC (USA), and WHO, and also European and Australian guidelines of treatment. Guidelines regarding use of anti-retroviral drugs in pregnancy, and guidelines related to the management of occupational or accidental blood exposures to HBV, HCV and HIV also come in handy to the readers. Printing is excellent, design lay out is

superb, and tables are crisply displayed in beautiful blue. Graphics are stunning. An ample number of color illustrations dot the entire textbook. While many photographs are of excellent quality, a few appear over- or under- exposed or are of poor resolution and may need replacement in future editions. Typographical errors are few. The textbook cover, of foliage-covered abstract forms of two entwining bodies with a tender sapling swaying to the breeze by their side (representing perhaps an offspring at the risk of a *disease*), is not only a visual treat but also is symbolic of what is to follow. The production quality of the book does not come as a surprise, coming from the illustrious house of Elsevier.

With the launch of a major textbook on STI's, comparison with *Holmes* becomes inevitable. But such a comparison is really illogical because the goals of the two books are different. In fact, one book perfectly complements another. As Franklin Judson has said in

his introduction, the book will have its widest readership in Asia and Pacific, home to nearly half of the world's population. With India poised to become (unless *we all* do something about it) the world's most populous nation by 2030 surpassing China (according to UN estimates) and with 5.1 million HIV/AIDS cases, second only to South Africa (UNAIDS' official estimates till the end of 2003), the book is indeed a godsend to all the clinicians, health care workers, social service personnel, administrators, policy makers and others who are engaged in the battle against STI's and HIV.

This is also a book a practicing or a trainee dermatologist cannot do without.

Buy, 'beg' or borrow, but you should have one in your clinic or in your departmental library.

K. K. Raja Babu

ANNOUNCEMENT

CONTACT AND OCCUPATION DERMATOSES FORUM OF INDIA (CODFI) FELLOWSHIPS

Contact and Occupational Dermatoses Forum of India is offering two fellowships in "Contact Dermatitis and Patch Testing" in year 2005. The applicant must be qualified dermatologist (M.D. Dermatology & Venereology). However, candidates with Diploma in Dermatology & Venereology are also eligible. The fellowship includes an award of Rs. 5000/- only and candidate needs to make his/her own arrangement for travel and stay. The candidates can train for 4 weeks at any of the three centers listed below:

Dr. V. K. Sharma
Professor and Head,
Department of Dermatology & Venereology,
All India Institute of Medical Sciences,
Ansari Nagar, New Delhi – 110 029.
E-mail: aiimsvks@yahoo.com

Prof. C. R. Srinivas
Department of Skin & STD,
PSG Hospitals,
P. O. Box no. 1674,
Coimbatore – 641 004.

Prof. A. K. Bajaj
Bajaj Skin Clinic
3/6 Panna Lal Road,
Allahabad.

The application along with biodata (x2) and copy of M.D. Dermatology certificate are to be submitted to Prof. V K Sharma, Head, Department of Dermatology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi. Last date of receipt of application is 21.12.2005. Selected candidates would be informed by e-mail.