
Book Reviews

Ecology of Infectious Diseases in Natural Populations. Eds B. T. Grenfell and A. P. Dobson. Cambridge University Press 1995. Pp. 521. £35.00. (US \$59.95). ISBN 0 521 46502 8.

Models for Infectious Human Diseases – Their Structure and Relation to Data. Eds V. Isham and G. Medley. Pp. 490. Cambridge University Press 1996. £45.00 (US \$59.95). ISBN 0 521 45339 9.

Epidemiology can be regarded as a branch of ecology. Indeed, the disciplines have much in common. Both deal with our understanding of populations. Though the treatment of disease is a matter for individuals, the control of the disease is a matter for populations.

The case of infectious diseases is particularly interesting in that the spread of a disease within a population is determined in part by the structure of that population while infections do themselves determine aspects of population dynamics. Thus, the understanding of the spread of disease in population and the relationship of this spread to the pathogenesis of infection is particularly important. Indeed such understanding is essential to disease control programmes. These concerns should be central to those involved in making the decisions about how infectious diseases can be combatted. The development of mathematical models that mirror the properties of infectious spread in natural populations is an important part of this enterprise. The discipline of relating predictions of the models to data derived from real epidemics roots the models in reality and by iterative steps enhances their value. These books represent the proceedings of two workshops set up to explore these important problems.

A major problem that I as Editor faced has been obtained a reviewer. However, this is an important area that the journal wishes to encourage. Thus, rather than leaving the books unreviewed I have decided to write a brief note and commend these texts to those with greater expertise in this area. Many of those that I could easily have approached to review these volumes have contributed to their purchase. Indeed, a valuable aspect of these publications is their relatively comprehensive coverage. In a sense, the earlier volume on *The Ecology of Infectious Diseases* provides the context in which the second volume on *Models for Infectious Human Diseases* needs to be placed. Among the major criticisms that can be made for those who study human

disease is that this leads to the isolation of people from the rest of the world's ecology. Consideration together of the data presented in these two volumes amply redresses this balance.

Those who work in this area will undoubtedly wish to acquire their own copies of these books. They should also be available in departments of Epidemiology and Biology with an ecological interest. Those working in departments of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases would find much here to stimulate thought and indeed argument. At a different level those concerned with policy development may find that these analyses provide a rational basis for action. A valuable outcome would be the modelling of policy interventions prior to their implementation. This would at least determine that the criteria by which the success of policy was to be judged would be known early.

B. S. DRASAR

*Senior Editor, Epidemiology & Infection
Professor of Bacteriology, London School
of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine*

AIDS and HIV – The Nursing Response. Eds J. Faugier and I. Hicken. Pp. 234. Chapman & Hall 1996. £14.99. ISBN 0 412 56090 9.

The book is very relevant to the nursing profession as nearly all nurses now deal with HIV and AIDS issues in the workplace.

It contains much information on the social, psychological, legal, ethical and political perspective of HIV and AIDS in Britain today. It also gives examples of incidences and organizations which have dealt specifically and effectively with these issues. However, it also notes the need for further nursing development, education and research which is necessary to alleviate the social stigma which surrounds HIV and AIDS.

Each chapter is well written by contributors who are working with HIV and AIDS and there are many references at the end of each chapter for further reading.

It is a book that all nurses should read to inform them further of the professional direction that nursing has achieved in response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

S. LEEDE

Hospital for Tropical Diseases