

uniqueness of his experience lies in the originality of his argument.

M. MCKINNON
*London School of Hygiene and
Tropical Medicine*

Manual of Clinical Problems in Infectious Diseases, 3rd Edition. Ed. N. M. Gantz, R. A. Gleckman, R. B. Brown, A. L. Esposito and S. Berk. Pp. 528. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1994. £22.95. ISBN 0 316 30349 6.

Such has been the rate of progress in the clinical practice of infectious diseases in recent years that the latest edition of Mandell's Principles and Practice of Infectious Diseases runs to well over 2000 pages. Only trained weight lifters, or those who can afford to employ a porter to push it behind them on a trolley, will have this tome available for reference on ward rounds. The third edition of the *Manual of Clinical Problems in Infectious Diseases*, which just about fits in a white coat pocket, therefore meets an important need.

It is written by five American infectious disease specialists, and has been extensively updated since the previous edition in 1986. Its style is strictly practical and problem based, and it is wonderfully concise, confining itself to the essentials. There are nine chapters devoted to infections of particular systems, followed by chapters on bacteraemia, fever, immunity, nosocomial infections, infections acquired from pets, newly appreciated infections, prophylaxis for travellers, tuberculosis, selected laboratory procedures, antimicrobial agents and AIDS.

I found the chapters on fever and on antimicrobial agents particularly useful. The investigation of fever is described in several categories of patient, including those without an obvious source of infection, those who have travelled abroad, those with prolonged fever with and without lymphadenopathy, those with an accompanying rash, and those who are immunocompromised. The chapter on antimicrobial agents takes one through the bewildering array of cephalosporins in only three pages, and is a model of lucidity. Every section is accompanied by a comprehensive list of recent references, which are usefully annotated to enable the reader to decide which ones to go and look for in the library.

The book inevitably has a strong American bias, and the topics selected are those most likely to be encountered by infectious disease physicians in the USA; the sections on tuberculin testing and isoniazid prophylaxis are not directly applicable to European practice. The chapter on AIDS is rather thin; but the authors do not claim to have written a comprehensive textbook, and there are plenty of other excellent guides to the clinical management of HIV infection and AIDS which would just about fit in the other white coat pocket.

I have to admit that I toyed with the idea of keeping quiet about this book, and hiding it in my office for secret consultation, in an attempt to keep one step ahead of my junior medical colleagues; but in the interest of our patients, I decided I should tell them about it, and encourage them strongly to buy their own copy rather than borrowing mine.

DAVID MABEY
*London School of Hygiene and
Tropical Medicine, London*