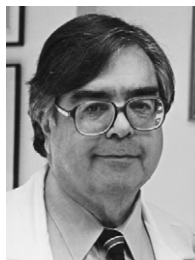


Preface



Burke A. Cunha, MD, MACP
Guest Editor

Since the author first edited a volume of the *Medical Clinics of North America* on Antimicrobial Therapy in 1982, the ensuing decades have witnessed a conceptual evolution in antimicrobial therapy. Emerging pathogens and antibiotic resistance have fueled the search for new antibiotics to cope with these ongoing challenges. Over the years, additional antimicrobial agents have been introduced to clinical use. Because the number of newly introduced antibiotics has been limited, clinicians have re-evaluated older agents with activity against newly resistant organisms. Recent decades have also witnessed an increase in the appreciation of the pharmacokinetic aspects of antimicrobials, which has led to an increase in the use of oral antibiotics to treat more and more infectious diseases. This volume of the *Medical Clinics of North America* on Antimicrobial Therapy builds on the previous volumes of 1995 and 2001, edited by the author, and focuses on the currently most relevant topics relating to antimicrobial therapy.

This issue contains articles written by recognized authorities on antibiotics from the United States and Europe. The contributors have been selected on the basis of their clinical experiences and expertise. The issue consists of 12 articles covering the most important aspects of antimicrobial therapy at the present time. It begins with an overview by Dr. Nancy Khardori of antimicrobial therapy past, present, and future, which places today's antimicrobial therapy in perspective. Dr. Charles Stratton contributes an article reviewing *in vitro* susceptibility testing versus *in vivo* clinical effectiveness of antibiotics. Other antibiotic concepts that are problematic for many physicians include the relative merits of monotherapy and

combination therapy for various infectious diseases, which are ably reviewed by Dr. Louis Saravoltaz. Older antibiotics are being “rediscovered” for new uses against resistant organisms. An article by the author focusing on new uses for older antibiotics is also included in this issue.

Antibiotic resistance among gram-positive cocci is a problem worldwide. Multidrug-resistant *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, vancomycin-resistant enterococci, and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* are the most frequently encountered gram-positive therapeutic challenges for physicians. Nationally, there is an underrecognized and underappreciated epidemic of macrolide-resistant *S pneumoniae*, and this important topic is well reviewed by Dr. Gary Doern.

The antimicrobial therapies for *Helicobacter pylori* and *Clostridium difficile* diarrhea/colitis remain thorny therapeutic problems. Key components of this issue are articles reviewing the current state of the art for the antimicrobial therapy of *H pylori*, by Dr. Duane Smoot, and for that of *C difficile* diarrhea/colitis, by Dr. Emilio Bouza.

The remaining articles are devoted to potential problems related to antimicrobial prescription. The common dilemma of selecting an antibiotic in the penicillin-allergic patient is reviewed by the author. The important topic of antibiotic drug interactions is carefully covered by Dr. Keith Rodvold. The issue concludes with the important subject of apparent antibiotic failure, covered by Dr. David Schlossberg.

This issue of the *Medical Clinics of North America* on Antimicrobial Therapy is an up-to-date desk reference source dealing with the most important clinical problems related to antimicrobial therapy that are currently faced by physicians.

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