

**INFECTIONS OF THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM. THIRD EDITION.** 2004 Edited by W. Michael Scheld, Richard J. Whitley, Christina M. Marra. Published by Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. 1080 pages. C\$325 approx.

Infections of the nervous system represent some of the most debilitating neurological disorders in humans. With the advent of emerging neurological infections including West Nile Virus, Nipah Virus, and variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease, infections of the central nervous system have become increasingly important. The three principal global infections - tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV infection - are all associated with disorders of the central nervous system. This book, is the latest edition of one of the premiere monographs on the subject and is edited by seasoned clinicians in the area with very high profile authors contributing individual chapters. The monograph is broken down into different sections including diagnostic approaches, viral infections, bacterial infections, spirochete, fungal, and protozoan infections together with neurosurgical management of CNS infections and a chapter on prevention.

There are some outstanding chapters in this textbook including a remarkably well-organized chapter on bacterial meningitis by Karen Roos and colleagues. In addition, the chapter on Lyme disease is outstanding and provides useful and relevant information to the clinician. However, the chapters vary widely in the extent to which pathogenesis, clinical presentation, and therapy are discussed. For

example, there is minimal space devoted to pathogenesis in the chapter on HIV, while the chapter on rabies is more than complete. There are also some notable oversights; for example the dose of acyclovir used in herpes simplex encephalitis in adults was not discussed nor is the duration of treatment dealt with. Other highlights include the chapter on viral meningitis and septic meningitis, which will be helpful to house-staff as well as experienced clinicians. For the most part, cutting-edge diagnosis tools are covered in each chapter although some chapters have failed to incorporate up-to-date molecular tools. There are also chapters devoted to rare neurological infections such as Whipple's disease, which are well written and will be of interest to clinicians. There are also areas that should have been included, including a chapter on Nipah virus, which is increasing in incidence with its spread to the Indian subcontinent and has the potential to spread through travel.

In summary, this monograph remains a valuable resource for both house-staff and experienced clinicians including those working in Infectious Diseases, Neurology, General Medicine, and Pediatrics. Moreover, it will also be of value to experimental scientists who want to become familiar with the basic concepts of neurological infections. While there are some oversights, this book is likely to remain a favorite among those interested in the area of central nervous system infections.

*Christopher Power  
Calgary, Alberta*