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Mastering the cognitive knowledge on paediatric infectious diseases is a formidable task for the vast number of infectious agents and their varied presentations. It is even more difficult to draw on that knowledge, deliberate on the clinical and laboratory data, develop a differential diagnosis, and finally formulate a rational investigation and management plan. This must be undertaken not only for clinical treatment but also from the perspective of infection control and public health. It is best to gain these skills at the bedside, guided and instructed by experienced teachers. With advances in immunisation and containment policies, nowadays many infectious diseases are rarely seen, yet they can always pop up posing awesome threats if not promptly diagnosed and controlled.

Learner-centred, case-based, and problem-based education has become a popular means of teaching medicine. Prof Frank E Berkowitz has created a book titled "Case studies in pediatric infectious disease" using this approach, that is both engaging and informative.

Based on over 30 years of experience, he has collected 121 highly educational and interesting cases. They include a wide spectrum of viral, bacterial, fungal and parasitic infections, many of which are rarely seen these days or are common only in tropical countries. This is especially important for young paediatricians, as many of these conditions are rarely encountered in daily practice.

Each case is presented in a context-based, relevant and realistic scenario, together with pertinent, challenging (but not frustrating) questions. This motivates the reader to explore approaches to the diagnosis and management of patients suspected of suffering from an infection. The discussion includes reference to a differential diagnosis in relation to the immune status of host. Aetiological possibilities are covered in relation to risk factors, exposure, and

physiological or pathological diagnoses, pathogenesis of the infection to manifestations. In addition, public health concerns, the need to identify sources, and risk posed to others are comprehensively discussed. Hence each scenario provides a useful and interesting means of addressing broader aspects of each infection, including infection control and public health. All the cases are very illustrative with numerous high quality colour photographs and radiographs that promote a deeper understanding. The related discussions are thorough and to the point. However, clinical management was not dealt with in detail and readers were provided with good references or advised to consult textbooks on infectious diseases. The introductory chapter on the general principles for the diagnosis and management of infectious diseases and the extensive tables and lists pertaining to infectious agents and their epidemiology contained in the appendix are very useful.

Case-based learning has been found to be very successful in the building of knowledge and application of knowledge in solving problems. By providing active learning through case studies should be a better way to promote reader comprehension than presenting concepts in a didactic way. The "Case studies in pediatric infectious diseases" by Frank E Berkowitz provides a wide range of cases to sharpen the clinical skill and is a must-read case study book for students of infectious diseases.

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