A CLINICIAN’S DICTIONARY OF PATHOGENIC MICROORGANISMS
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Preface

This booklet represents an attempt to provide clinicians with a convenient means of understanding the taxonomic designations of the various bacteria, mycobacteria, fungi, parasites, and viruses that may be recovered from their patients. The taxonomy (the names of the microorganisms) continues to be updated and changed with alarming frequency. Much of this is based on our expanding knowledge of the ability of certain “newer” organism groups to cause disease, e.g., *Helicobacter* species, *Bartonella* species, *Rhodococcus* species, *Ehrlichia*, *Cyclospora*, and hepatitis viruses. In addition, application of the powerful new tools of molecular biology to groups of organisms such as the family *Enterobacteriaceae* has led to reclassification of older members of the family and to description of newly recognized species based on the homology of their DNA. This booklet catalogues the current state of microbial taxonomy as of mid-2003.
Considerable effort has gone into making this catalogue of pathogenic microorganisms as complete as possible. It should be regarded as a “quick reference,” however, and, thus, a starting place to gain an understanding of the significance of the recovery of various microbes from human clinical specimens. An attempt has been made to include all of the common pathogens, and several less frequent ones. However, it is not an exhaustive listing of arcane microorganisms. The reference lists included in the booklet present a selection of the most contemporary sources (mainly books, reviews, and the most clinically relevant journal articles) that the reader may pursue for a more in-depth discussion of the various organisms and diseases.

We sincerely hope that this dictionary will help increase the understanding of microbial pathogens by practicing clinicians, house officers, students, epidemiologists, infection control practitioners, and other allied health professionals. It is to their need for concise, practical information that we have directed this effort.

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