Cryptococcus neoformans
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By

Arturo Casadevall
Albert Einstein College of Medicine
of Yeshiva University
Bronx, New York 10461-1602

and

John R. Perfect
Department of Microbiology
Duke University Medical Center
Durham, North Carolina 27710
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PREFACE

_Cryptococcus neoformans_ has been a known human pathogen for over a century. The history of its epidemiology, ecology, taxonomy, molecular biology, pathobiology, diagnosis, and treatment strategies mirrors discoveries in the general field of medical mycology. This primary fungal pathogen, which can infect apparently normal hosts, has also become a major secondary fungal pathogen as it has been able to exploit immunosuppressive events of modern medicine such as human immunodeficiency virus and AIDS, cancer, and immunosuppressive therapies. As we approach the new millennium, the importance of this fungus and the infection it causes—cryptococcosis—has never been greater for clinical medicine. Infection with this encapsulated yeast occurs in all areas of the world, and clinicians at all levels of care-giving may be faced with its challenges.

We have been impressed with the knowledge base for cryptococcosis developed by many outstanding and dedicated investigators over the past 100 years. This book is a tribute to their scholarship and creative insights. In the 1950s, Littman and Zimmerman produced an excellent monograph on the understanding of cryptococcosis up to that time. In our present book, _Cryptococcus neoformans_, we attempt to chronicle the substantial progress in the understanding of this infection since their mid-20th-century treatise. With this comprehensive book, we have attempted to “draw a line in the sand” of knowledge regarding this fungus so that future generations can step over it. Our intention is that this book will be useful for both the student who is beginning to search the cryptococcal knowledge base, and the medical mycologist who wants in-depth coverage and references.

John E. Bennett coined the term “sugar-coated killer” for _C. neoformans_ at a lecture to the Infectious Disease Society in the 1990s. This complex, killer yeast has become a model fungal pathogen for the study of pathobiology at all scientific levels. This book describes its history, assesses its current status, and provides an outlook on the future. There is much more to learn about this yeast’s secrets. It is our hope that this book will stimulate scientists to pursue the understanding of this successfully evolving fungal pathogen.

Arturo Casadevall
John R. Perfect
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