

Book review

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***Parasites of Man.* J Sarath Edirisinghe**

A Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha Publication, Sri Lanka, 1999, ISBN 955-599-154-5, 175 pages (Paperback).

A concise handbook on parasites causing human disease is always a useful tool for medical students, post-graduates and clinicians. Dr Sarath Edirisinghe's book "*Parasites of Man*" fulfils this need to a great extent. The book has two obvious merits. Firstly, parasites have been classified according to their location in the human body, literally from head to foot; such a classification will undoubtedly be useful to clinicians and histopathologists. Secondly, its major emphasis is on parasites of humans found in Sri Lanka, including those involved in zoonotic infections. In addition, it also deals with parasites which are likely to be imported to Sri Lanka as result of increasing international travel, and a large Sri Lankan immigrant work force.

The text is easy to read and includes the relevant parasitological details in a concise format. These include geographical distribution, morphology, life cycles, pathology, clinical manifestations, diagnosis, transmission, prevention, and control and treatment. Regarding treatment the author has overlooked the danger of administering diethylcarbamazine to patients with onchocerciasis and loiasis. Schematic representations of the life cycles have been carefully done and are easy to follow. Some of the diagrams of parasites, on the contrary, do not have the same degree of clarity, and a few of them may not be mean-

ingful to those unfamiliar with their appearance. As many of the parasites are found in more than one location the reader is directed to refer to other locations given in the book as well; an indication of the number of the relevant page would have been helpful here.

The text is marred by numerous spelling errors, some relating to the names of parasites and drugs. This is unfortunate, and suggests that proof-reading has been hurriedly done. The detailed zoological classification and nomenclature of each parasite given in the text seems out of place in a concise book of this nature. Someone requiring this type of information will obviously refer standard reference textbooks of parasitology. Furthermore, the nomenclature, including names of authors, are all given in the same font which can be confusing. Considerable space could have been saved by pruning this part.

On the whole this handbook is an admirable effort. It could have been improved with more emphasis on the clinical aspects of the diseases caused by parasites. For example, a six-page description of *Entamoeba histolytica* has only four lines relating to clinical manifestations. More emphasis on clinical aspects would have made this handbook more useful to physicians and general practitioners.

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