

BOOK REVIEW

Tropical Dermatology, First Edition. Stephen K. Tyring, Omar Lupi, Ulrich R. Hengge. 2005. London: Churchill Livingstone. 528 pages.

Comprehensive textbooks about the clinical features, diagnosis, and management of tropical diseases are often described as challenging to assemble because many so-called “tropical” diseases, although more common in the tropics, often occur in temperate climates. This issue is especially relevant to a book describing “tropical skin diseases”.

In a new textbook entitled *Tropical Dermatology*, Stephen Tyring and 2 colleagues, Omar Lupi and Ulrich Hengge, have succeeded in producing a germane, comprehensive review of skin diseases relevant to the tropics. A large factor in their success was assembling an impressive collection of over 90 qualified authors to write about tropical skin diseases in their areas of interest or expertise. Many authors are well-respected clinicians and researchers in the field, are from disease endemic regions, and have diagnosed and treated the entities they describe.

As importantly, the book contains a large number of high-quality color clinical, histopathological, and microbiological images that are essential, if not expected, parts of any dermatology textbook that is destined to be highly regarded. Many chapters contain helpful maps showing regions where specific diseases are found, as well as color diagrams that depict entities such as viral envelopes and life cycles and provide the reader with basic pathogenicity information.

There are only a handful of tropical dermatology textbooks available, a topic that is increasingly relevant. The preface of *Tropical Dermatology* echoes some important concepts on tropical dermatology in 2006. Not only are an increasing number of health care providers practicing in tropical locales, persons living in temperate climates are more frequently presenting with skin diseases acquired in tropical countries, largely because of the ease and availability of international travel. This is evidenced by a growing number of journal articles describing traveler’s dermatoses.

Like many general tropical disease textbooks, *Tropical Dermatology* is organized into 3 large sections, including an Introduction that covers syndromal tropical dermatology, issues for travelers, and working in the tropics. The remaining 2 sections describe infections and non-infectious conditions, respectively. The placement of infectious before non-infectious conditions is appropriate, given the etiology of the majority of tropical diseases. However, the comprehensive list of non-infectious etiologies reminds the reader that not all tropical dermatoses are infectious, and the importance of for-

mulating multi-etiological differential diagnoses that include entities such as bites and stings. The infections section is subdivided into major etiologies by organism group, and then by individual causative organisms.

The arrangement of the table of contents is clean and logical, and does not overwhelm the reader with extraneous details. The chapter headings re-appear at the beginning of each major section in the book, providing the reader helpful landmarks. The editors placed protozoan and helminthic diseases ahead of bacterial, viral, and fungal disease, a reminder of the breadth of tropical disease etiologies.

At the beginning of each chapter, the main topics are highlighted in colored boxes, a pattern that is repeated for each individual condition. This quickly focuses important concepts for the reader, an especially useful format for those just browsing. Each chapter follows a logical format that includes introduction, history, epidemiology, pathogenesis and etiology, clinical features, patient evaluation, diagnosis and differential diagnosis, and treatment. Synonyms and key feature boxes at the beginning of each individual condition are useful graphical summary techniques appearing more frequently in reviews and textbooks.

There are numerous tables throughout the book that provide useful summaries of the text, many covering an entire page. Tables contain black text on a light blue background, making them readily apparent. The tables, formatted as grids with both horizontal and vertical lines, are somewhat tedious to read. There is little bolding of the text in most tables, and text line spacing is generous, features that may cause some difficulty in identifying related items.

The individual chapters are generally well written and provide current, accurate, and comprehensive information. In addition, many chapters include interesting anecdotes or pearls of wisdom that are not often mentioned in general tropical disease books, making the book an enjoyable read. Reference lists are appropriate in length, focused, and accurate.

This book will be a welcome addition to the library of health care providers interested in learning more about tropical dermatology, or by those who evaluate patients on a regular or occasional basis with skin diseases that may fall in the category of tropical skin diseases. The editors should consider producing updated editions as time passes.

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