

Travel Medicine: Tales Behind the Science

**Annelies Wilder-Smith, Marc Shaw,
and Eric Schwartz, editors**

**Elsevier Science, New York, New
York, USA, 2007**

ISBN: 978-0-08-045359-0

Pages: 333; Price: US \$42.80

This book is a compilation of 40 essays written by many of the most recognized names in the field of travel medicine. It is divided into 9 sections with such topics as the history of travel medicine, vaccines, travel medicine research, pilgrimages, and even space travel. Photographs, tables, and charts enhance the reader's interest, especially when one spots a familiar person or place.

The styles range from the didactic, to short story to poetry, and the mood ranges from the humor of Jay Keystone's "Ten Commandments" to the stark reality of Marc Shaw's "Amazonas Adventure." One cannot help but chuckle at Charles Ericsson's description of diarrhea research or laugh outright at Steve Toovey's "Woman Atop the Crocodile," and Nancy Piper

Jenks' account of undocumented migrants may bring the reader to tears.

This is not a formal textbook of travel medicine, but much can be learned from it. Although not a history text, the book is replete with fascinating accounts of medical history. One learns such things as the origin of the word "quarantine," the complexities of preparing a certification examination, and the sheer terror of being on the front lines of an epidemic of severe acute respiratory syndrome. In short, the volume explains why things are the way they are in travel medicine and why this new discipline has, of necessity, become a separate specialty.

The essays need not be read in the order presented, but surprisingly, some of the topics that seem least interesting turn out to be the most fascinating. Much of the book reads like a medical detective story; other parts read like a medical journal but the writing is more compelling.

If I had to produce a criticism for the book, it would be simply that the publisher has picked a size of print that is almost too small for my presbyopic eyes. Overall, the book is a fascinating read, and one can only hope that future editions will be forthcoming.

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Coronaviruses: Molecular and Cellular Biology

Volker Thiel, editor

**Caister Academic Press, Norfolk,
UK, 2007**

ISBN: 978-1-904455-16-5

Pages: 350; Price: US \$300.00

Coronaviruses are a group of single-stranded RNA viruses that mainly cause enteric and respiratory diseases in infected hosts. Before 2002, coronaviruses were known as important veterinary pathogens, as well as a cause of the common cold in humans. In 2002–2003, with the advent of

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the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), this picture changed. SARS was quickly shown to be caused by a novel coronavirus, and the ensuing explosion of research on coronaviruses is reflected in this new book.

This multi-authored book contains 16 chapters and is organized into 2 sections. The first section of 7 chapters covers most aspects of coronavirus replication, from virus binding and entry into the cell to genome packaging. When appropriate, these chapters also draw on recent work with the closely related arteriviruses. Each chapter generally offers excellent and balanced reviews of the coronavirus literature through 2006, with a few references from 2007. The second section of 9 chapters discusses various aspects of the host-pathogen interface of several coronaviruses; the major focus is the SARS coronavirus, although

the human coronavirus NL63 and murine, feline, and avian coronaviruses are also covered.

This book provides a one-stop entry into current thinking in the field. For those unfamiliar with coronaviruses, the first section offers a current view of how these viruses replicate. Two areas that are not as well represented in this section are effects of coronavirus infection on cellular processes, such as the cell cycle, apoptosis, and other signaling pathways, and protein trafficking, virus assembly, and release. Separate chapters on these areas would have strengthened the book. In some ways, the second section of the book is not as satisfying. The 3 chapters on SARS coronavirus and the chapter on human coronavirus vaccine development have introductory sections that are somewhat repetitive. Including chapters on transmissible gastroenteritis virus and porcine re-

spiratory coronavirus would also have been beneficial. That said, the chapters on SARS and the avian, murine, and feline coronaviruses are excellent.

I heartily recommend that this book be placed in the library of every laboratory that is working on this fascinating group of viruses. It will be particularly valuable to newcomers to the field by providing a single entry point to recent thinking about these agents.

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ANOTHER DIMENSION

The CAT Scan

Ronald O. Valdiserri

I enter your portal through a scrim of invisible rays,
beads of energy outnumbering my regrets.
Supine on a cold bed, part supplicant, part sacrifice.
Like all captives, fearing judgment.
Woosh, then comes the warm tingle of the dye,
everywhere at once.
It feels like a cleansing...
washing away debris, debt, equivocation.
“no,” silently, I correct myself,
acknowledging the iodine’s more melancholy assignment:
building a luminous marquee around 56 years of imperfection and wear.
And the lights blink yellow.

Dr Valdiserri is chief public health consultant in the Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards at the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Prior to joining the VA in 2006, Dr. Valdiserri served as the deputy director of the National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.