
Preface

Neisseria meningitidis is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in childhood in industrialized nations and the organism is responsible for epidemics of disease in Africa and in Asia. Because of its public health impact, meningococcal disease is of interest and importance to clinicians, clinical microbiologists, public health physicians, epidemiologists, and research scientists. In *Meningococcal Disease* we have brought together a series of review and methods-based chapters that provide essential information for diagnosis in the clinical microbiology laboratory, isolate characterization, clinical management, and control of meningococcal disease.

New vaccine initiatives are expected in many countries over the next few years, to control both epidemic and endemic disease, and it is hoped that the information available in this book on surveillance and characterization of meningococcal isolates will be of use in the planning of vaccine strategies. A companion text on *Meningococcal Vaccines* is also available from Humana Press and includes overview chapters and detailed methods for the design and evaluation of meningococcal vaccines.

We are grateful to the many contributors to this text who have provided a series of state-of-the-art chapters for inclusion in this book. We are grateful to the series editor, John Walker, and the staff of Humana Press, for inviting our participation as book editors. We acknowledge the contribution of the many clinicians, microbiologists, and scientists who continue to make a major contribution to the diagnosis, management, surveillance, and control of meningococcal disease around the world.

Andrew J. Pollard, PhD
Martin C. J. Maiden, PhD



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Pollard, A.J.; Maiden, M.C.J. (Eds.)

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