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## Preface

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The concept of probiotics was conceived hundreds and thousands of years ago but became more tangible at the turn of the century when Metchnikoff documented his intelligent correlation between the health of Bulgarian peasants and the consumption of what would now be considered probiotics. Since then many scientists and investigators have diligently designed and performed experiments and trials to prove or disprove the power of probiotics. A great number of probiotic products in various shapes and forms have become available to the consumer and more than ever clinicians are dealing with children and patients that consider the use of probiotics.

The purpose of this project is to provide clinicians in general and clinicians caring for children more specifically, with a tool to understand the current evidence for the role of probiotics in various pediatric disorders related to the gastrointestinal as well as the extra-intestinal tract. This book will provide evidence-based up-to-date information from experts in the field to help clinicians make decisions regarding the use of probiotics. Currently, the market for probiotics continues to rely heavily on health claims made by manufacturers and retailers and clinicians ultimately have the sole responsibility to understand the various strains and preparations that are commercially available and be able to advise patients accordingly.

We hope that this book will serve as a helpful tool and a critical resource for health professionals to enhance their ability to make the appropriate decisions regarding the use of probiotics.



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