

# Preface

Viral infections of the nervous system are a challenging group of diseases for clinicians and for researchers. The pathogenetic mechanisms involved in this group of diseases are very diverse. Although some, like enteroviral meningitis, are common. However, many are rare and have limited and unpredictable distributions, both geographically and in time (e.g., Nipah virus infection). Specialized diagnostic investigations are often necessary for definitive diagnosis, although a presumptive diagnosis should often be suspected on the basis of the clinical features. Many of these infections are serious diseases with high morbidity or mortality or with fatal outcomes (e.g., Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease and rabies). A majority of the authors are neurologists and most have either a background or a distinguished career in basic neurovirology research, which gives them unique insights in writing about these diseases. Only further research will give us a better understanding of the basic mechanisms involved in all aspects of these infections, which will, hopefully, lead to future advances in their therapy.

My interest in the field of neurovirology became solidified when 30 years ago I first read Dr. Richard T. Johnson's book entitled *Viral Infections of the Nervous System* (Raven Press, 1982). Two years later, I became a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Johnson's research laboratory at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. I hope this volume will also stimulate the interest of young people in this intriguing field. I would like to thank Dr. Beatrice Menz at Springer Basel for giving me the opportunity of putting together a volume on these infections and to all of the expert contributors for their hardwork in preparing up-to-date chapters and sharing their expertise and insights on this diverse group of diseases. They have all done a superb job.

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