

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

### **THE HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS. BIOLOGY, IMMUNOLOGY, AND THERAPY.**

Edited by Emilio A. Emini, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003,  
532 pp., \$80.00 (hardcover).

Emilio A. Emini is among the world's leading authorities on antiviral research. As Vice-President of Vaccine and Antiviral Research at the Merck Research Laboratories, he led the research team that developed indinavir, one of the earliest HIV protease inhibitors, as well as the group that discovered efavirenz, another antiviral highly effective in treating HIV infections. More recently, he has been working on the development of an AIDS vaccine. Thus, he was eminently qualified to bring together a group of leading research scientists to produce a current up-to-date overview of the various aspects of HIV research. The result is a superb and comprehensive volume that summarizes all that is taking place in HIV research at the present time.

The authors of the thirteen chapters of this volume are among the best investigators in their areas of expertise. They have produced authoritative contributions that cover topics that include the genetics of HIV-1, HIV-1 protease inhibitors, the structure and biology of HIV-1, HIV prevention, HIV vaccines 2000, and several others. The contributors to this volume include laboratory and social scientists, epidemiologists, and physicians. Together, under the editorship of Dr. Emini, they have created what is the leading comprehensive treatise on HIV research. It will be of great value not only to research investigators, but also to physicians who treat HIV-infected patients and to those engaged in efforts to prevent the disease and to mitigate its social, economic, and psychologic consequences.

Pascal James Imperato, MD, MPH & TM  
Editor

### **DECEIT AND DENIAL. THE DEADLY POLITICS OF INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION.**

By Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, Berkeley: University of  
California Press/The Millbank Memorial Fund, 2003, 408 pp.,  
illustrated, \$34.95 (hardcover).

This is an extremely important volume, thorough in its coverage, meticulous in its research, and riveting in the messages it conveys. Industrial mendacity on an almost routine basis has been widely documented as the norm. In this book, the authors expose the tortuous paths of deceit and slick public relations used by a number of industries to

camouflage the known dangers of their products and their manufacturing processes, and to hide them from both government regulatory agencies and the general public. Besides documenting the long and complex history of the lead and vinyl industries, the authors expose the complex interplay of industry, science, politics, and civil rights. They explain how industries have succeeded in exerting control over scientific research and in creating the illusion of product safety by funding investigators who produce findings favorable to them. They also describe in detail the various groups of workers and community groups that have launched numerous efforts to hold the polluters in check. The authors have relied on a number of sources including secret industry documents, interviews with industry and government insiders, as well as others who have been prominent in the industrial pollution debate. Their 81 pages of notes reflect their careful efforts to present as comprehensive and as objective an account as possible.

*Deceit and Denial* is the sixth in a series of volumes jointly published by the University of California Press and the Millbank Memorial Fund on Health and the Public. As such, it represents an excellent contribution toward efforts to promote and protect the public health. It will hopefully help with the future formulation of public policies to protect both workers, consumers, and communities from the deleterious effects of industries primarily driven by corporate profits. This volume is highly recommended to a wide range of public health professionals.

#### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE U.S. HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

Fifth Edition. By Steven Jonas, New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2003, 233 pp., \$36.95 (softcover).

This volume has long served as an excellent introduction to the health care system in the United States. In this fifth edition, Steven Jonas has completely updated the content to reflect major changes in the American system of health care. He has been engaged in this effort since he succeeded the late Dr. Milton Roemer with the third edition of this volume. The current edition is divided into nine chapters, an epilogue, and three appendices. In addition, the author provides almost three pages of abbreviations following the preface. This is an extremely valuable enhancement to this book, especially as many of its users will be those in need of a basic outline of the U.S. health care system. A twelve-page glossary similarly serves a valuable purpose for readers at the introductory level. *An Introduction to the U.S. Health Care System* is an excellent introductory text that has the right balance of breadth and depth. It is highly recommended.

#### AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN PANDEMIC. THE INFLUENZA OF 1918.

Second Edition. By Alfred W. Crosby, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 337 pp., \$60.00 (hardcover), \$22.00 (softcover).

First published in 1976 under the title *Epidemic and Peace: 1918* by Greenwood Press, and re-issued in 1989 by Cambridge University Press under the current title, this volume has over the years been recognized as a definitive history of the 1918 influenza pandemic. This edition, which contains a new preface by the author, makes this book widely available again to younger generations of readers who will greatly profit from the historical lessons it carries. The emergence of new infections and the re-emergence of older ones, coupled with their ease of transmission from one part of the world to another, has shaken the confidence we once had that epidemic infectious diseases were largely of historical concern in the first world. Despite excellent antimicrobial agents and better vaccines, epidemic diseases currently pose major threats worldwide. The inventory of unforeseen recent epidemics include HIV/AIDS, Legionnaires' Disease, West Nile virus, and most recently, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

While our focus has often been on these newer infections, one must never forget older known ones such as influenza. The ability of the influenza viruses to undergo antigenic drifts and shifts ensures their survival and the certainty of recurrent epidemics. The 1918–1919 pandemic of influenza was by far the worst ever recorded. Some 25 million people died worldwide, and almost 20 million cases were reported in the United States. Even more disconcerting was that the disease struck old and young alike, and caused an unprecedented mortality rate. Most of the genome for the 1918 pandemic virus has now been reconstructed, and we currently have in place a worldwide influenza surveillance network. Yet, as the author points out, we still do not know what made the 1918 virus so lethal. Therein lies the great cause of concern on the part of medical scientists, public health officials, and the general public. While we now have powerful antiviral agents against the influenza viruses and the capacity to produce fairly effective vaccines, mustering our vaccine production capacity to meet a crisis remains an open question. Some of these issues are addressed by Gina Kolata in her 2001 volume, *Flu: The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Virus That Caused It* which also covers the research efforts to reconstruct the 1918 virus' genome.

*America's Forgotten Pandemic* is a well-written, comprehensive history based on solid scholarship and meticulous research. It is highly recommended to a wide audience of readers.

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