

Book Review

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Descriptions of Medical Fungi, 3rd edition

Reviewed by:

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Since its primary release in 1992 and a second version in 2007 the book 'Descriptions of Medical Fungi' has been impressively advanced in its utility for identification of fungi. The initial editions of this book titled 'Descriptions of Medical QAP Fungi' were prepared as description sheets to facilitate identification of fungi at participant laboratories in the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) Mycology Quality Assurance Program (QAP). Keeping pace with the major shifts in fungal nomenclature, an updated and refurbished third edition is now available. The authors have attempted to reconcile and portray the present-day morphological description of medically important fungi with supplementary phylogenetic studies.

The morphological descriptions of pathogenic fungi have been kept brief and many have been based on descriptions by other authors and are in accordance with current accepted fungal names in the well-curated online databases like; Index Fungorum (www.indexfungorum.org), Mycobank (www.mycobank.org), the International Society for Human and Animal Mycology ISHAM ITS database (<http://its.mycologylab.org>) and the CBS-KNAW Fungal Biodiversity Centre database (<http://www.cbs.knaw.nl>). Key morphological descriptions for mould identification, like culture characteristics conidial characteristics, arrangement, growth on the conidiogenous cell, type of conidiogenous cell and additional features are included. Complimentary methods for fungal identification based on PCR-based assays, comparative DNA sequence analysis and proteomic methods such as MALDI-TOF MS are supplemented wherever necessary. The book is embellished with 345 delightful colour

photographs of over 170 pathogenic fungal species from 100 genera to aid identification. This includes members of Zygomycota, Hyphomycetes, Dimorphic Pathogens, Yeasts, and Dermatophytes. The book depicts plentiful easy to use colour coded antifungal susceptibility tables (green for susceptible, yellow for susceptible dose dependent or intermediate, red for resistant) which are convenient for susceptibility data interpretation. These susceptibility data are sourced from both the literature and from Australasian clinical isolates generated by using the Clinical Laboratory Standards International (CLSI) M27-A and the CLSI M38-A for yeasts and mould species respectively. The CLSI M27-S4 clinical breakpoints are marked where available. Risk Groups of fungal pathogens are referenced based on published data and definitions are in concordance with Australian/New Zealand Standard As/NZS2243:3:2010 Safety in Laboratories Part 3; Microbiological Safety and containment. Apart from sections on staining methods for microscopy and mycological techniques, the book also provides formulations for more than 20 specialized mycological culture media and over 500 taxonomic references.

From the turn of the 21st century, the field of mycology has seen taxonomical overhauls. This has led to many available medical mycology textbooks on identification on the shelves becoming progressively out of date. Thus the book 'Description of Medical Fungi' at this juncture, distinguishes itself as a handy workbench book for day to day identification of clinical fungi.

About the book:

Sarah Kidd, Catriona Halliday, Hellen Alexiou, et al. Descriptions of Medical Fungi. 3rd edition. Newstyle Printing. The National Library of Australia Cataloguing, Adelaide, Australia. 2016. 264 pp. Paperback. ISBN: 9780646951294.
