BOOK REVIEW

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'Infection Control in the Community'. Chief Editors – Jean Lawrence and Dee May.
New York: Churchill-Livingstone; 2003. 373 pages, ISBN 0-443-06406-7.
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'Infection Control in the Community' by Lawrence and May, was written in response to years of sustained enquiries about infection control from individuals and organisations in community settings. The text boasts contributions from 18 authors, and presents a comprehensive review of issues related to infection control in community settings. With the exception of one, all contributing authors are nurses with a wide and varied experience base and national and international reputation for expertise in their field.

The book methodically and systematically builds on the knowledge of the reader, and provides an impressive series of chapters dedicated to speciality topics and community settings. Structured in classic textbook style, the text consists of 21 chapters signalling groups or themes. The book begins with introductory chapters that review basic microbiology, infectious diseases, and general principles of infection control. Although not covering these areas in great detail, the chapters provide a good elementary introduction to key principles and knowledge in infection control.

Moving into the role and function of public health in health care, the text covers epidemiology and surveillance, the important areas of infection control science. Following on with cleaning, disinfection, and sterilisation, the book moves almost immediately into special areas, including home nursing, nurseries and schools, nursing homes, general practice, health centres, dental practices, travellers, the homeless, refugees, tattooing and body piercing, and even prisons. The inclusion of these areas is very encouraging given that many of them (in particular tattooing and body piercing) are areas of significant challenge for infection control practitioners and health care workers. Other specialist areas of information provided include antibiotic resistance, wound care, and immunisation.

The appendices include a list of Internet resources on evidence-based health care, infection control legislation (UK-based), and contact tracing and notification procedures to undertake in the event of an outbreak. Each chapter provides a reference list and additional resources that reader may engage with to source further information. The material is easy to read, and well structured and illustrated. Graphically, the text is easy to peruse, with good attention to detail with respect to

suitable combinations of black and white illustrations, photos, textboxes, diagrams, and summaries.

A key feature of this book is this it takes infection control, traditionally a defined 'hospital-based' problem, to the outside world, emphasising consistently throughout that infection control should be the concern of everyone in health care. As health care has shifted from hospital to community settings, the demand for relevant and applicable infection control policies, procedures, and strategies to the community setting has grown. It is particularly pleasing to see that the authors have acknowledged that implementation of infection control strategies in community environments is significantly more problematic than in traditional hospital settings, and that the challenges for community health care workers are very real.

What is notable by its absence in this book is any reference or section covering health care workers from the pre-hospital emergency health care setting—paramedics or ambulance personnel. No reference to paramedics or ambulance personnel could be found anywhere in this text. Almost every other conceivable community health care setting has been included other than ambulance. This omission, although not altogether unheard of, is still surprising. There is a paucity of research on infection control knowledge and practices of paramedics, with clinical guidelines and procedures often adopted from the nursing setting. The authors should consider including such a section for future editions. Despite this, the book provides an excellent resource for addressing many of the infection control challenges for health care workers in community settings, and indeed paramedic and ambulance personnel are able to learn a great detail from this recourse and apply it their practice.

A comprehensive and authoritative text, this resource is suitable for a wide array of individuals in a variety of disciplines.