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## Preface

Medical Microbiology comprises and integrates the fields of immunology, bacteriology, virology, mycology, and parasitology, each of which has seen considerable independent development in the past few decades. The common bond between them is the focus on the causes of infectious diseases and on the reactions of the host to the pathogens. Although the advent of antibiotics and vaccines has certainly taken the dread out of many infectious diseases, the threat of infection is still a fact of life: New pathogens are constantly being discovered; strains of „old“ ones have developed resistance to antibiotics, making therapy more and more difficult; incurable infectious diseases (AIDS, rabies) are still with us.

The objective of this textbook of medical microbiology is to instill a broad-based knowledge of the etiologic organisms causing disease and the pathogenetic mechanisms leading to clinically manifest infections into its users. This knowledge is a necessary prerequisite for the diagnosis, therapy, and prevention of infectious diseases. This book addresses primarily students of medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy. Beyond this academic purpose, its usefulness extends to all medical professions and most particularly to physicians working in both clinical and private practice settings.

This book makes the vast and complex field of medical microbiology more accessible by the use of four-color graphics and numerous illustrations with detailed explanatory legends. The many tables present knowledge in a cogent and useful form. Most chapters begin with a concise summary, and in-depth and supplementary knowledge are provided in boxes separating them from the main body of text.

This textbook has doubtless benefited from the extensive academic teaching and the profound research experience of its authors, all of whom are recognized authorities in their fields.

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On behalf of the authors  
*Fritz H. Kayser*