

BOOK REVIEW

AIDS AND THE DENTAL TEAM

Authors:

D. Greenspan & J.S. Greenspan (USA)

J. J. Pindborg & M. Schiødt (Denmark)

1st Edition Munskaaerg (1986)

The first case of AIDS and eight carriers were reported in the local press in September 1986. Since then, more cases were identified, with four deaths. The review of this 98-page handbook takes on an urgent tone. In the preface, it is noted that the authors' aim is to give the dental team an understanding of the problems of AIDS as they relate to their jobs. To this end, they have done justice in being informative and easily understood.

The contents of the book is made up of eight chapters, uncomplicated in presentation, with a logical sequence leading to the last chapter dealing with AIDS control in dental practice. The coloured photographs are abundant and illustrative. 60 references are quoted, which are internationally spread and inclusive of the recent congress held in Paris (June 1986). The characteristics of this condition are well covered in the chapters on epidemiology, aetiology and immunology.

Oral candidiasis is a common dental problem and it is now considered an important part of this condition. Hairy leukoplakia is readily seen in most cases. Intra-oral Kaposi's Sarcoma is documented, especially on the palate. Recurrent aphthous ulceration is increasingly featured in risk groups. Generally, oral infections should be considered more seriously. Suspicion should be raised in persistent and unexplained cases.

Current evidence suggests that the risk of contacting AIDS through health care work, although possible, is very slight. However, recommendations are made to reduce this risk, including wearing of masks, gloves and eyewear, disinfection procedures and proper disposal of used and waste materials, in the management of all dental patients. The cost-implications of such preventive measures have not been discussed in this book. For a balanced thought, infection from hepatitis B virus through dental procedures is more likely than from the AIDS virus.

Assoc Prof Loh Hong Sai