

Preface to the Sixth Edition

In the age of the Internet, why would anyone write a textbook about virology? Indeed, why would anyone write anything about virology? Virology isn't dead yet (DiMaio, 2014), and neither are books. I encourage everyone to use the wonderful resource of the Internet to improve their knowledge of virology. I encourage my students to use Wikipedia and Google to learn the facts. But as Jimmy Wales said, *Wikipedia is often the best place to start, but the worst place to stop*. The role of this book is not primarily about knowledge but about sense-making—what you can't get from Wikipedia. Virology *explained* by setting facts in a larger context.

Along with updating the facts and smoothing some of the rough edges, I have noticed a big scientific change in writing this edition. Open Access scientific publishing has finally made its impact felt. In this updated edition the reading recommendations at the end of each chapter I have been able, in *almost* all cases, to recommend freely available peer-reviewed content for readers. You may have to hunt around to find it—a good working knowledge of PubMed and Google Scholar is at least as useful as Google and Wikipedia—but it is now possible to access much of the scientific literature the public has paid for. But there is still the question of interpretation. In writing this book I have tried to do my part. The rest is up to the reader.

As with previous editions, I am grateful to the staff of Elsevier, in particular Halima Williams and Jill Leonard, for their patience with me.

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Reference

DiMaio, D., 2014. Is virology dead? mBio 5 (2), e01003–e01014.