

Preface to Second Edition

It is now seven years since the first edition of *Essential Microbiology* was published, so it is high time the contents were updated, and I have taken the opportunity to revise the layout in the hope that it will better serve its target readership. The main change to the book from its original incarnation is the inclusion of a chapter on microbial disease in humans. When preparing the content of the first edition, the one major area of doubt I had was whether or not to include a chapter or section on medical microbiology. I was urged to do so by a number of colleagues, but in the end I resisted, feeling it to be too large a topic for inclusion in a general introductory text. The invitation to prepare a second edition, however, has given me an opportunity to reconsider the matter, and comments from several reviewers, together with further reflection on my own part, have persuaded me to change my mind. I have therefore introduced a new chapter on microbial disease in humans, supplementing new material with some expanded and repackaged from other chapters in the first edition. This has resulted in a shuffling and reordering of the second half of the book, which I hope leads to a more logical structure. The new edition no longer features end-of-chapter quizzes; however, these and other forms of self-assessment can now be found on the book's dedicated website. The other major change that will be noticed by anyone familiar with the original book is the introduction of colour. I feel strongly that a book such as this should be visually attractive as well as instructive, and am grateful to my editorial team at Wiley for allowing me this indulgence, in spite of the additional pressure it creates in trying to keep the selling price to a minimum, which was always one of the principal aims of *Essential Microbiology*.

As always, I should be grateful to receive any comments and suggestions for improvement from students or their tutors.

Stuart Hogg
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