Difficult Diagnosis & Management of Tuberculosis
Made Easy

Tuberculosis (TB) is a well-known public health priority, involving thousands of physicians and nurses all over the world in a difficult diagnostic and treatment process. While in high TB (and HIV) prevalence settings, the disease is well known by all health staff categories, in the low TB incidence countries of Europe tuberculosis is becoming less and less prevalent over the last decades. The main consequence of these epidemiological changes is that the new generations of physicians are less and less frequently confronted with this disease, and delays in diagnosis (leading to further transmission in the community) are becoming, unfortunately, common.

Furthermore, mistakes in its clinical management (e.g. regimen choice and duration, drug dosage, management of adverse events, etc.) are also described in the recent literature.

There is obvious need to keep TB in mind in the differential diagnosis of pulmonary diseases, and to ensure then that a correct diagnosis and treatment process is implemented.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the main scientific societies, ERS (European Respiratory Society) included, have developed excellent guidelines on how to diagnose and treat tuberculosis, and International Standards for TB Care exist to guide the clinician in this difficult task.

In a way, the diagnostic approach to manage the patient with chronic cough is well described (being based on bacteriology with the support of chest radiograph), and the treatment is standardised, its selection depending on the patient’s infectiousness and presence/absence of previous treatment history.

Although the pulmonary patient is the most relevant for transmission and the commonest, TB affects, unfortunately, all organs in the human body.

Diagnosis of extrapulmonary tuberculosis is often complicated, as well as its clinical management.

This book by Tosaddak Ahmed (Difficult Diagnosis & Management of Tuberculosis. Made Easy*), published by Yaypee, is really useful for clinicians who want to improve their skills in managing difficult TB cases.

Derived from the author’s huge experience in TB among in- and outpatients managed at King Fahad District General Hospital at Madinah AlMunawara, Saudi Arabia, the book is really easy to read and use, being accompanied by a CD-ROM including quality images which perfectly complement the text.

The book, after introducing briefly the WHO-recommended standard approach to TB treatment, proposes seven chapters.

The first chapter is on "TB of lungs and other organs", and includes interesting cases going from miliary and endobronchial TB to testicular disease with dissemination.

The following chapters cover "TB of lymphnodes", "bones and joints" (19 cases are discussed), "pleura and pericardium", "central nervous system" and "abdomen". The last chapter covers nine "disseminated TB and miscellaneous" cases.

Overall, the author guides the reader to diagnose and treat 65 atypical cases, offering an extremely useful tool for young (and less young) specialists dealing with TB.