

Medicine beyond frontiers

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Emerging Infectious Diseases Beyond 2001

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During the past three decades, many new infectious diseases have been discovered, e.g. Legionnaire's Disease, Lyme Disease, AIDS, Ehrlichiosis, Hepatitis C, etc. New infectious disease syndromes have been characterized, e.g. toxic shock syndromes (*Staphylococcus aureus* and Group A *streptococcus*), Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, etc. Microbial etiology has been established for "non-infectious" diseases, e.g. peptic ulcer disease, Whipple's disease, Kaposi's sarcoma, bacillary angiomatosis in AIDS patients, cat-scratch disease, etc.

At the same time, antimicrobial resistance is becoming an increasing problem in clinical practice. Methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA) and vancomycin-resistant enterococcus (VRE) are increasing problems. *S. aureus* with higher vancomycin MIC (GISA, VISA) have been isolated in patients from several countries. Penicillin and macrolide resistant *Streptococcus pneumoniae* is now widespread. Multiple resistant gram-negative bacilli including strain-producing ESBL are problems in ICU's. Multiple drug resistant *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* is a worldwide problem.

In the years to come, more diseases will be discovered to be of microbial etiology. An excellent candidate is *Chlamydia pneumoniae* in the pathogenesis of coronary arteriosclerosis.