

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND DIGESTIVE SYSTEM DISORDERS: A WINDOW TO DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT

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Editorial

The authors are all experts in diseases typical of the Mediterranean Basin and in microbiological diagnosis, as well as part of a team of experts in the management of patients with infectious and non-infectious diseases of the digestive system. They have attempted to engage the reader by featuring old and new diseases in the light of new migration flows and climate change in order to aid the clinician in managing difficult clinical cases that, in any event, are no longer confined to our geographical area in view of the scientific progress and globalization affecting the old European continent.

This special issue not only focuses on emerging infectious diseases but also on the recently identified role of some pathogens as triggers in the etiopathogenesis of certain tumours. Moreover, the authors look at another factor of European epidemiological change, namely age and sex in the clinical presentation of digestive system diseases. In fact, the population of over 60-year-olds is growing, and in almost every region of the world, but especially in industrialized countries, people are currently likely to live to 80 years of age. During the last 15 years of their life, half of them will suffer from multimorbidity, that is, they will live with at least two co-existing chronic diseases such as cancer and HIV infection.

Moreover, gender is a relevant risk factor for cancer and/or other associated comorbidities in immune-compromised patients. Education on methods to deal with infectious disease and cancer investigations should be given high priority in controlling and containing these disorders. Finally, the issues examined here highlight prevention practice recommendations regarding emerging pathogens by risk factors such as geographic area, sex and age at presentation, which are of relevance to health practitioners and/or policy makers.

In planning for infectious disease outbreaks, it is essential that local public health and private resources are involved in order to improve their management in the hospital setting.