A variety of infections including viral (Hepatitis B, Epstein Barr Virus etc.), bacterial (Streptococci, Helicobacter etc.), fungal and protozoal have been implicated as triggers of acute urticaria [4]. Classically malaria, is not associated with skin rash, petechial haemorrhages in skin and mucous membrane but they occur rarely in falciparum malaria. A few case reports, from India cite instances of Plasmodium vivax malaria presenting with acute urticaria [5,6].

The pathogenesis of acute urticaria in patients suffering from vivax malaria remains speculative. Plasmodial sporozoites inoculated while taking a blood meal, multiply in the liver producing daughter merozoites, which after release into the bloodstream, attach themselves to specific receptors on erythrocytes. This attachment is known to make the erythrocytes antigenic by altering red cell membrane, exposing the hitherto hidden surface antigen and inserting new parasite derived proteins [7].

The increased antigenicity of RBCs caused by plasmodial infection [7], or plasmodial antigens per se may be responsible for the massive mast cell

degranulation in the present case. Whether this was mediated by immunological or direct mechanisms is unknown.

Conflicts of Interest

None identified

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Book Review

National Health Programmes of India by J Kishore. 5th Edition. Published by Century Publication, New Delhi, 2005. 476 pages, Rs 400 (INR), ISBN: 81-88132-13-6.

This book provides information on various national health programmes, national policies and legislations related to health in India. This edition is thoroughly updated and many new chapters of public health importance such as reproductive and child health programme-II, National Rural Health Mission, Integrated Disease Surveillance Project, and Millennium Development Goals are also included. These new chapters will be beneficial to teachers and students. This is the unique book, which is not only useful for the postgraduate but also the undergraduate medical, nursing, and social

science students. The quality and contents of the material presented in the book is quite optimal. In this edition the author has included summary at the end of topic, which is very beneficial for quick reviews. Author has touched the millennium development goals as a short topic and it is felt that the next edition should deal with the topic as a separate chapter. This edition is an attempt to enrich the different public health experts, policy makers, project officers and social workers with new events and happening in the field of health programmes and policies of India.

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Text book of Principles and Practice of Infectious Diseases by GL Mandell, JE Bennett. 6th Edition. Published by Elsevier Churchill Livingstone, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2005. Paper back 1726 pages, Rs. 11000 (INR), ISBN:0443-06643-4.

Knowledge about infectious diseases has undergone an extraordinary expansion during the years between publication of the last edition of this book, and the present. The threat of previously unrecognised infections has emerged, and an awareness of the role of microbes as potential agents of terrorism heightened. The population of patients whose host defences are compromised by underlying diseases or by medical treatment continues to increase

and this has resulted in complex and challenging infections. This edition has attempted to capture this explosion of knowledge in an authoritative, complete, yet readable and readily accessible text. Every chapter has been revised, and many have been added. New chapters on SARS, Nipah and Hendra viruses, uncommon fungi, bioterrorism agents, and hospital preparedness for emerging and highly contagious infections are included. New colour figures and revised tables have been added, which makes it comprehensive.

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