

Preface

Diphtheria, the strangling angel of children, has lost its threatening potential with the development of anti toxin, toxoid vaccine and antibiotics in the last century. However, even today several thousand cases per year are reported to the World Health organization and especially the outbreak of diphtheria in the former states of the Soviet Union demonstrated impressively that diphtheria is not completely eradicated.

The outbreak in the 1990s, the development of new molecular biology tools and especially the availability of genome sequence information gave new impetus to research in this field. Several strains of *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*, the etiological agent of diphtheria and the type species of the genus *Corynebacterium* have been sequenced and genome data are available for two closely related pathogenic species, *Corynebacterium ulcerans* and *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis*.

The book summarizes the latest advances made in understanding physiology and host pathogen interaction of *C. diphtheriae* and its relatives. Topics addressed are genomics of toxigenic corynebacteria, host-pathogen interactions, diagnosis, surveillance and treatment strategies as well as application aspects.



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Corynebacterium diphtheriae and Related Toxigenic
Species

Genomics, Pathogenicity and Applications

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