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Biography

- Wenjie Sun obtained a MBBS in preventive medicine (An Hui Medical University), a MMed. in Nutrition and Food Hygiene (Institute of the nutrition and food safety, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention) and a Ph.D. in Epidemiology from The University of Hong Kong.

- He was a Postdoctoral Fellow at MD Anderson Cancer Center, University of Texas for 2 years and a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the School of Public Health and Tropic Medicine, Tulane University for a year.

- Dr. Sun has published several papers on esteemed journals including PNAS, JAMA. Dr. Sun's research area focus on H5N1,, H7N9 and AIDS.

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Research Interest

- Infectious diseases, Nutrition and Food Hygiene

Publications

- Li C, Liu T, **Sun W**, Wu L, Zou Z, *Prevalence and risk factors of arthritis in middle-aged and older Chinese population: The China Health And Retirement Longitudinal Study*. ***Rheumatology*** **(In Press)**
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Infectious Diseases

- Infectious diseases are disorders caused by organisms — such as bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites.

- Many organisms live in and on our bodies. They're normally harmless or even helpful, but under certain conditions, some organisms may cause disease.

- Some infectious diseases can be passed from person to person.

- Some are transmitted by bites from insects or animals. And others are acquired by ingesting contaminated food or water or being exposed to organisms in the environment.

- Signs and symptoms vary depending on the organism causing the infection, but often include fever and fatigue.

- Mild complaints may respond to rest and home remedies, while some life-threatening infections may require hospitalization.

- Many infectious diseases, such as measles and chickenpox, can be prevented by vaccines. Frequent and thorough hand-washing also helps protect you from infectious diseases.

Signs and Symptoms

Each infectious disease has its own specific signs and symptoms. General signs and symptoms common to a number of infectious diseases include:

- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches

Causes

Infectious diseases can be caused by:

- **Bacteria.** These one-cell organisms are responsible for illnesses, such as strep throat, urinary tract infections and tuberculosis.
- **Viruses.** Even smaller than bacteria, viruses cause a multitude of diseases — ranging from the common cold to AIDS.
- **Fungi.** Many skin diseases, such as ringworm and athlete's foot, are caused by fungi. Other types of fungi can infect your lungs or nervous system.
- **Parasites.** Malaria is caused by a tiny parasite that is transmitted by a mosquito bite. Other parasites may be transmitted to humans from animal feces.

Direct contact

An easy way to catch most infectious diseases is by coming in contact with a person or animal who has the infection. Three ways infectious diseases can be spread through direct contact are:

- **Person to person.** A common way for infectious diseases to spread is through the direct transfer of bacteria, viruses or other germs from one person to another. This can occur when an individual with the bacterium or virus touches, coughs on or kisses someone who isn't infected.
- These germs can also spread through the exchange of body fluids from sexual contact or a blood transfusion. The person who passes the germ may have no symptoms of the disease, but may simply be a carrier.

- **Animal to person.** Being bitten or scratched by an infected animal — even a pet — can make you sick and, in extreme circumstances, can be fatal. Handling animal waste can be hazardous, too. For example, you can acquire a toxoplasmosis infection by scooping your cat's litter box.
- **Mother to unborn child.** A pregnant woman may pass germs that cause infectious diseases to her unborn baby. Some germs can pass through the placenta. Germs in the vagina can be transmitted to the baby during birth.

Indirect contact

- Disease-causing organisms also can be passed by indirect contact. Many germs can linger on an inanimate object, such as a tabletop, doorknob or faucet handle.
- When you touch a doorknob handled by someone ill with the flu or a cold, for example, you can pick up the germs he or she left behind. If you then touch your eyes, mouth or nose before washing your hands, you may become infected.

Insect bites

Some germs rely on insect carriers — such as mosquitoes, fleas, lice or ticks — to move from host to host. These carriers are known as vectors. Mosquitoes can carry the malaria parasite or West Nile virus, and deer ticks may carry the bacterium that causes Lyme disease.

Food contamination

Another way disease-causing germs can infect you is through contaminated food and water. This mechanism of transmission allows germs to be spread to many people through a single source. E. coli, for example, is a bacterium present in or on certain foods — such as undercooked hamburger or unpasteurized fruit juice.

Treatment and Drugs

Knowing what type of germ is causing your illness makes it easier for your doctor to choose appropriate treatment.

- **Antibiotics**

Antibiotics are grouped into "families" of similar types. Bacteria also are put together in groups of similar types, such as streptococcus or E. coli. Certain types of bacteria are especially susceptible to particular classes of antibiotics. Treatment can be targeted more precisely if your doctor knows what type of bacteria you're fighting.
Antibiotics are reserved for bacterial infections, because these types of drugs have no effect on illnesses caused by viruses. But sometimes it's difficult to tell which type of germ is at work. For example, some types of pneumonia are caused by viruses while others are caused by bacteria.

The overuse of antibiotics has resulted in several types of bacteria developing resistance to one or more varieties of antibiotics. This makes these bacteria much more difficult to treat.

Antivirals

Drugs have been developed to treat some, but not all, viruses. Examples include the viruses that cause:

AIDS
Herpes
Hepatitis B
Hepatitis C
Influenza

Antifungals

Severe fungal infections can affect the lungs or the mucous membranes of the mouth and throat — commonly in people who have weakened immune systems. Antifungals are the drugs of choice for these types of infections.

Anti-parasitics

Some diseases, including malaria, are caused by tiny parasites. While there are drugs to treat these diseases, some varieties of parasites have developed resistance to the drugs.

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