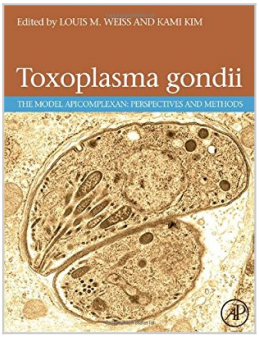

Toxoplasma Gondii: The Model Apicomplexan. Perspectives and Methods

By Louis M. Weiss, Kami Kim

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Toxoplasmosis is caused by a one-celled protozoan parasite known as *Toxoplasma gondii*. In the United States, it is estimated that approximately 30% of cats, the primary carriers, have been infected by *T. gondii*. Most humans contract toxoplasmosis by eating cyst-contaminated raw or undercooked meat, vegetables, or milk products or when they come into contact with the *T. gondii* eggs from cat feaces while cleaning a cat's litterbox, gardening, or playing in a sandbox. Approx 1 in 4 (more than 60 million) people in the USA are infected with the parasite, and in the UK between 0.5 and 1% of individuals become infected each year. By the age of 50, 40% of people test positive for the parasite. The predilection of this parasite is for the central nervous system (CNS) causing behavioral and personality alterations as well as fatal necrotizing encephalitis, and is especially dangerous for HIV infected patients.

Though there have been tremendous strides in our understanding of the biology of *Toxoplasma gondii* in the last decade, there has been no systemic review of all of the information that has accumulated. ***Toxoplasma gondii*** provides the first comprehensive summary of literature on this organism by leading experts in the field who were responsible for organising the 7th International Congress on Toxoplasmosis in May 2003. It offeres systematic reviews of the biology of this pathogen as well as descriptions of the methods and resources used. Within the next year the *T. gondii* genome will be completed making this an indispensable research resource for biologists, physicians, parasitologists, and for all those contemplating experiments using *T. gondii*.

* Serves as a model for understanding invasion of host cells by parasites, immune response, motility, differentiation, phylogenetics, evolution and organelle acquisition
* Discusses the protocols related to genetic manipulation, cell biology and animal models while also providing reference material on available resources for working with this organism

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Editorial Review

About the Author
Louis M. Weiss M.D., M.P.H is Professor of Medicine (Division of Infectious Diseases) and Professor of Pathology (Division of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine) of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, New York. Dr. Weiss received his M.D. and M.P.H degrees from the Johns Hopkins University in 1982. He then completed a residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Chicago and a fellowship in Infectious Diseases at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Following this fellowship, he joined the faculty at Einstein where he is currently a Professor of Pathology and Medicine. His laboratory group has an active research program on parasitic diseases with a research focus on Toxoplasma gondii, the Microsporidia and Trypanosoma cruzi. Dr. Weiss is the author of over 200 publications and the editor of 3 books on parasitology. He is a fellow of the American College of Physicians, Infectious Disease Society of America and the American Academy of Microbiology. Dr. Weiss is the Co-Director of the Einstein Global Health Center.

Kami Kim M.D. is Professor of Medicine (Division of Infectious Diseases), Professor of Pathology (Division of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine) and Professor of Microbiology and Immunology of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, New York. Dr. Kim received her M.D. degree from Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1984. She trained in internal medicine at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center and in infectious diseases at the University of California, San Francisco. Following her clinical training, she did a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Microbiology & Immunology at Stanford University School of Medicine, after which she joined the faculty at Einstein where she is currently a Professor of Medicine, Pathology and Microbiology and Immunology. Her laboratory research is focused upon understanding the pathogenesis of toxoplasmosis and malaria. Recently she has developed collaborations with clinical investigators at the Blantyre Malaria Project in Malawi to understand the clinical impact of HIV co-infection upon cerebral malaria. She is also interested in understanding epigenetic and genetic factors that govern the host response to parasitic infections, opportunistic pathogens and tuberculosis. Dr. Kim is a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology and the Infectious Disease Society of America and an elected member of the Association for American Physcians and the American Society for Clinical Investigation.

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