



Book Review

Surgical Pathology of the Mouth and Jaws

R.A. Cawson, J.D. Langdon, J.W. Eveson, Wright, Oxford, 1996, 326 pp, £95.

I enjoyed reading this book, another from two well-known clinical oral pathologists. On this occasion they have combined with a maxillofacial surgeon who is also an established author. By adding the operative point of view, the authors have achieved their objective of a surgeon's manual, but this text will also be useful to both oral and general histopathologists. Candidates sitting surgery, pathology or medicine options of the FDS examination, or specialist surgeons preparing for the FRCS in plastic and reconstructive, ENT or maxillofacial surgery will particularly benefit from this book, and I would commend it to them. Undergraduates will also find the book a useful and interesting source of reference, although I imagine the hefty price tag will render this volume (as intended by the authors) an essentially postgraduate text.

The importance of rapport between surgeon and pathologist is emphasised in the preface, and the opening chapter of the book should be mandatory reading for all surgical SHOs before they fill in their first biopsy request form. This would enable them to avoid querulous calls from histopathologists because of a request form devoid of clinical information. In this event, however, goodwill can be retrieved if any pertinent radiographs are despatched to the laboratory with the specimen. The pathologist's other *cri de coeur*, that for a decent sized piece of tissue to analyse (preferably without forceps imprints, Fig. 1.1!) is highlighted later in the chapter on disease of the oral mucous membrane, with the observation that the smallest incisional biopsies come from the surgeons most accustomed to resecting extensive areas of the head and neck.

The text deals systematically with every disease a surgeon operating around the mouth and jaws is ever likely to see and presents a digest of much recently published data. I found the review of the epidemiology of oral cancer, often a turgid subject despite its importance, very helpful. In discussing the

aetiology of the disease, the authors comment on the confusion engendered by those who, ignorant of the peculiarities of oral neoplasia, indulge in the unfortunate habit of lumping together salivary, laryngeal, nasopharyngeal, thyroid and oral malignancy as "head and neck cancer". Examination candidates will be pleased with the detailed coverage of oral manifestations of HIV infection, and trainee surgeons will appreciate the frequent surgical and management interludes, although technical minutiae are avoided. All non-experts will be grateful for the simplified classification and description of lymphomas. The information is neatly presented and lavishly illustrated with radiographs and photomicrographs, the latter all in colour, from Dr Eveson's top notch histopathology archive. Some of the radiographs would have benefited from having the pertinent feature arrowed, and it is possible that surgeons may feel the same about some of the micrographs. Nevertheless, the whole is easy to read and the good reference lists at the end of each chapter will enable readers to follow up any extra details they require.

It is a relief to see English spelling retained, although there are scattered typographic errors. As explained in the preface, a conscious decision was made to omit clinical photographs but two which are included, those demonstrating the procedure of labial gland biopsy, appear not only as Figs 1.4 and 1.5 on page 3 but manifest later as Figs 11.22 and 11.23 on page 230. However, these are minor hiccups and will not deter anyone who cares to take a look from reaping much from this book.

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