



Book Review

Pathology

A. Stevens and J. Lowe, 1995, Mosby. ISBN 0 397 44764 7, £29.95, CD-ROM version £49.95.

The authors helpfully set out at the very start, what they call (slightly pretentiously perhaps) their Credo. Among their beliefs is that the undergraduate curriculum is overloaded, that knowledge of clinically relevant pathology is more important than knowledge of basic sciences such as molecular biology, that insufficient emphasis is given to common and important diseases and that colour photographs and graphics are essential to illuminate the more difficult concepts and to enhance learning. Their aim has therefore been to present clinically relevant pathology in an easily assimilated form with an abundance of pictures. It is not too much to say that the authors have succeeded brilliantly.

A preamble on how to use the book, gives some idea what to expect. Blue boxes encapsulate the more clinical aspects of disease and the investigation of disease processes. Pink boxes give details of mechanisms and current knowledge of molecular biology or genetic aspects of diseases. Uncoloured boxes enclose Key Facts to summarise previous sections and provide essential points for revision. There are also green boxes for such matters as classifications or lists of causes of particular diseases and flow charts are generously scattered throughout the text. There can be no doubt that the authors have made an enormous effort to make matters exceptionally easy for the reader.

The somewhat luridly coloured cover should also not mislead the potential reader as to the quality of the illustrations. Opening any page at random one is instantly struck by the clear and attractive presentation of the material. The innumerable colour photomicrographs are of excellent quality, as are the colour photographs of gross specimens and the diagrams. Apart from a few electron micrographs, there are no black and white illustrations. In some cases, diagrams are fitted beside and explain photomicrographs, while others, such as that explaining the molecular pathology of cystic fibrosis, are particularly ingenious.

One of the most impressive chapters is that on renal disease where an enormous amount of information is beautifully presented. The large coloured diagrams explaining the electron microscopy are particularly splendid as are the photomicrographs.

Neoplasia is very well covered. The chapter on general aspects of neoplasia is replete with diagrams of, for example, cellular events for neoplastic transformation, cellular attributes for invasion and metastasis, and the actions of oncogenes. Cytogenetic abnormalities in human tumours, the main oncogene products and mechanisms of abnormal regulation are among the information summarised in tables. There are excellent photomicrographs and information on clinical aspects and epidemiology is not neglected. Tumours involving the individual body systems are also well described in subsequent chapters and the difficult area of lymphomas is very informative. For Hodgkin's disease, diagrams amplify the different appearances of Reed-Sternberg cells. For non-Hodgkin lymphomas, a diagram illustrates particularly well the stages of maturation of normal B-lymphocytes, while another illustrates the interrelationships between the Working Formulation and the Kiel classification. Investigation and prognostic aspects are also clearly summarised.

Altogether, the authors and publishers must be congratulated on producing a text which presents and explains so much useful information so clearly and attractively. The artwork is superb and the book is a pleasure to look at. Information positively leaps to the eye and can hardly fail to be absorbed. The price includes a demonstration disk of the CD-ROM version. It is a truly remarkable bargain and highly recommended.

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