BOOK REVIEW

Greenfield’s Neuropathology
Editors: S. Love, D. N. Louis and D. W. Ellison.
Hodder Arnold, London, UK
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2244 pages, $475.

The editors’ preface to the 2 volumes of the eighth edition of Greenfield’s succinctly outlines the text’s role and purpose in the neuropathology cosmos: “Our aim has been to ensure that Greenfield’s Neuropathology continues to provide an authoritative, comprehensive account of the pathologic findings in neurologic disease, their biologic basis and clinical manifestations, and that this account is underpinned by a clear description of molecular and cellular processes and reactions that are relevant to the normal and abnormal functioning of the nervous system.”

To deliver on that assurance, the text has been significantly overhauled; of the 71 authors, only 10 have been retained from the seventh edition, thus providing a new perspective in many, if not most, subject areas. All of the authors are visible and respected in their subject areas, although interestingly, there is not a single one from outside the Western world. This edition omits chapters on structure and function and ophthalmology, thus allowing considerable space to be devoted to new genetic and molecular information for specific diseases, the net result being a gain of only 24 pages over the seventh edition. The number of illustrations has increased from approximately 2,000 to 2,700, and virtually all are appropriate and descriptive, although the grade of paper necessarily used in a text of this size precludes the illustration quality found in an atlas. In addition, the number of tables has increased by 80 to 212. The references seem generally appropriate and as up-to-date as possible in a text authored by so many.

The downsides to a text of this magnitude include an inevitable variation in style of writing—which I personally do not find distracting at all—and the sheer weight of the book. On my scale, it weighs 15 pounds, which means that I never carry it around with me. However, it is sold with an illustrated DVD-ROM, restoring its appeal on that scale.

The eighth edition celebrates the 50th anniversary of Greenfield’s Neuropathology, the first edition having been published in 1958. Interestingly, the present edition was published in the United Kingdom, typeset in India, and printed and bound in Italy, underscoring the “flatness” of the modern technological world.

Notwithstanding all these changes, the eighth edition certainly does nothing to detract from Greenfield’s impeccable stature in the world of neurologic disease, and time will likely only enhance this stature. It is the ultimate reference text, the sine qua non of the study of neuropathology. Do not worry about the price—you have to have it!

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Neuropathology Review, 2nd Edition
Richard Prayson, MD
Humana Press, Totowa, NJ
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252 pages

Remember when you did your first neuropathology rotation and the neuropathologist asked you what type of infectious organism those small round blue structures were scattered throughout the slide of your autopsy case brain or spinal cord? You likely remember those sneaky questions and hopefully talked to the resident who preceded you to find out the tricks.

Dr. Prayson’s text, entitled Neuropathology Review, 2nd Edition, would have helped as well. Based partially on a College of American Pathologists educational course that Dr. Prayson gave (and which I was fortunate to take as a resident approximately 10 years ago), this text has great educational value. It is arranged in a very well-organized and concise outline format, with the first half of the book covering basic neuropathology in approximately 85 pages. This is followed by 350 excellent questions, many with classic gross and microscopic images (including that pesky corpora amylacea question), and finishing with a nice index.

The text is targeted to pathology, neurosurgery, and neurology residents rotating on a neuropathology service (and studying for board exams), although medical students interested in neuropathology will also benefit from it. Because it will be passed around among the group, a nice feature is that it is a hardback edition, which should give it some longevity. In addition, a CD containing all of the questions and 171 color images (the text is black and white) and formatted to allow self-testing with short answers is provided. For the educators’ benefit, the color images can be saved in JPEG format to add to lectures (with appropriate acknowledgement of course). Overall, this will be a great addition to a set of texts available to residents and students in neuropathology. They will get through it quickly and will appreciate the images and questions.

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