
In the words of its authors, the aim of Handbook of Surgical Pathology is to provide "a comprehensive range of information required in day-to-day work" in surgical pathology. This book is primarily intended for pathology residents at the beginning of their training in surgical pathology. The authors' motivation for writing this text is to provide, in a manageable handbook format, a detailed synopsis of the why's and how-to's of the practice of surgical pathology which are typically acquired in a piecemeal fashion over the course of training and beyond. In an attempt to present this information in a manageable fashion, some of the topics are presented as an overview and supplemented with relevant references. Lest anyone be misled by the title, this is not another textbook of diagnostic surgical pathology.

Although some of the material presented in this book is similar to that found in the early chapters or appendices of a standard surgical pathology text such as Ackerman's Surgical Pathology (eg, history of surgical pathology, laboratory layout, etc), there are several topics which trainees in surgical pathology typically consider only when confronted with a specific need or when a problem arises, if they ever consider them at all. For example, an early chapter discusses laboratory safety at a level many residents don't consider until they have the opportunity to participate in a CAP laboratory inspection. There is a detailed discussion of the principles of specimen description and dictation. Development of good descriptive techniques is an aspect of residency training that seems to fall through the cracks in many programs, a problem that is often encountered when reviewing old cases for conferences or research. Similarly, chapters on the proper use and maintenance of the microscope, photomicroscopy, and troubleshooting technical problems in the histology laboratory provide information which residents often acquire in a haphazard fashion. Other chapters include discussions of preparation for clinico-pathologic conferences, starting and maintaining reprint and slide collections, and general ideas for preparing for professional examinations. In general, the authors succeed in bringing together a wide range of useful information for beginners in surgical pathology.

The weakest portion of this book is the chapter on the examination, description, and sampling of specimens. The presentation of this topic is somewhat hampered by the format. The authors recognize that more detailed monographs on this topic are available. Furthermore, most surgical pathology laboratories have their own detailed gross specimen manual. However, in an effort to present an overview of the topic, the authors seem to be caught in the middle between too low detail and an extensive discussion which could be a text in its own right. The list of specimens and details of their gross examination is fairly comprehensive but is difficult to read. In addition, there are only a limited number of diagrams. As a result, this chapter may not be very comprehensible to a novice, who would probably do better with the presentation in Ackerman's Surgical Pathology. The presentation might have worked better in the context of this book had the authors highlighted the discussion with examples of gross descriptions of specimens.

Despite this weakness, I believe that this book does address an important need in surgical pathology training. In general the authors have compiled a wide range of information on the practice of surgical pathology and presented it in a manner which could benefit beginning residents. I intend to share my copy of this book with first-year residents who rotate through our surgical pathology service.

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Bostwick DG, Eble NJ, eds. Urologic Surgical Pathology.

From 1987 to 1988 the incidence of clinically detected prostate cancer in Olmsted County, Minnesota, the residence of one of the editors, doubled. This is but one example of the effect that widespread implementation of increasingly sensitive serum assays for PSA have had upon the growth of urologic pathology as a subspecialty field of surgical pathology. More sensitive assays for prostate cancer have resulted in an exponential growth in the frequency of minimal cancers. The resulting expectation of clinicians that we pathologists can reliably diagnose and grade these cancers, which sometimes consist of no more than a single malignant gland, and developments in many other areas of urologic pathology, eg, the importance of distinguishing PIN I from PIN II, new subcategories of renal cell neoplasia, and the importance of tumor markers in the prognosis of cancers of the bladder and prostate, has been followed by the publication of a number of large, comprehensive books focused solely on urologic pathology.

In Urologic Surgical Pathology, editors Bostwick and Eble have brought together a group of renowned uropathologists to write what is currently the most comprehensive...
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reference in urologic pathology. Intended (in the words of the editors) for use by surgical pathologists in daily practice, this book is well indexed, plentifully illustrated, and written, for the most part, in accord with the editors' wishes for uniformity of style, thereby minimizing the disparities in content and presentation that often characterize multi-authored texts. Some features stand out as paragons of such a reference text. This work is an approachable, even enticing, book. The design and graphics are both appealing and poignantly informative. The front cover is textured, being embossed with sketches of the lower genitourinary tract based on drawings by Leonardo da Vinci. Sections of chapters are highlighted by different colors. The charts and tables, which are plentiful, are designed to communicate their data both by the ease with which they are interpreted and by their design and color. Throughout the book are both black and white and color illustrations of generally superb quality. Many low-magnification color photomicrographs are simply stunning. Particularly commendable are the relatively large number of color gross photographs, which are the most laborious type of figures to obtain. In what other book can one find color gross photographs of malakoplakia of the bladder and of a spindle cell nodule of the bladder neck? References are abundant and current. Finally, most of the newer concepts relevant to the pathology and pathogenesis of diseases that fall within the purview of the uropathologist are discussed, eg, subtypes of renal cell carcinoma, molecular abnormalities in different neoplasms, and changes in stage criteria.

That said, some aspects of the book could have been better. As the rate of growth of genetic information about neoplasms of all body sites continues to accelerate, the likelihood that all pathologists will have to be conversant with this data becomes more certain. Although there are brief discussions about molecular genetic changes in some tumors, the reader would be better served by both an introduction to current molecular topics of importance, with schematic illustrations to clarify concepts that are probably novel for most of us pathologists, and greater detail concerning what is known. For example, there is no discussion about several important genetic findings in genitourinary tumors, ie, the Hippel-Lindau gene product, the recently cloned tuberous sclerosis gene, or the hypothesis that a Y chromosome locus is responsible for gonadoblastoma. Furthermore, clinical correlations and perspectives could have been expanded, to both the benefit of pathologists as communicators of data important for patient management, and of clinicians to make them aware of the relative importance of different pathologic parameters. The discussion of the clinical consequences, or the lack thereof, of making certain pathologic distinctions could have been expanded. For example, the clinical and biologic consequences of failing to distinguish an oncocytoma from a chromophobe cell carcinoma, or a diffusely infiltrative transitional cell carcinoma of the kidney from a renal cell carcinoma, are not discussed. The presentation of such novel conventional ancillary techniques as immunohistochemical profiles of histologically similar neoplasms and the role of assessing DNA tumor cell content as a prognostic marker could have been both expanded and presented as tables of cell- and tumor-specific antigen profiles. Unexpected immunophenotypes, eg, sarcomatoid carcinomas that express virtually no keratin, or leiomyo-sarcomas that are diffusely keratin immunoreactive, are not discussed. There was little on cytology, an area for which many uropathologists are responsible. Despite the intentions of the editors to achieve balance in content, there are some imbalances between chapters. The only chapter that exceeds 100 pages covers the topic that is most rarely encountered—the non-neoplastic testis. Conversely, the chapter on non-neoplastic kidney omits renal lesions on which many uropathologists will probably be consulted—glomerular disease and renal transplant pathology.

In summary, despite some omissions, this is the text to which I first turn for pathologically problematic urologic lesions, with assurance that the entity will both be discussed, and, most likely, illustrated. This book is an invaluable aid for the practicing uropathologist, and serves as a role model for future subspecialty pathology texts.

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