

BOOK REVIEWS



Cancer of the Lung: From Molecular Biology to Treatment Guidelines

Weitberg AB, ed. (\$125.00.) Humana Press, 2001. ISBN 096 03830 0.

This book is "designed for oncologists with general interests who diagnose and treat patients with lung cancer". It is divided into three parts—basic science and the evaluation of lung cancer, which includes molecular biology, and techniques for diagnosis, staging, and histology. The second and third parts are concerned with the treatment of non-small cell and small cell carcinoma, respectively. The reviewer cannot comment on these last two sections.

The molecular biology was divided into two sections—a primer and a more detailed section—and there was obvious overlap between them. If the book was meant to appeal to physicians, a more liberal use of diagrams may have helped their understanding. In a rapidly moving field, and given that the book is supposed to be published in 2002 according to the copyright (I received my copy in November 2001), the references were up to date.

The histology sections were based on the WHO recommendations (1999), but should have included the use of TTF-1 as a discriminator between primary and secondary lung tumours. Similarly, calretinin and cytokeratin 5/6 were not mentioned, or the elucidation of pleural adenocarcinoma versus mesothelioma. These authors also state that typical and atypical carcinoids may be associated with tumourlets—a rare occurrence.

I found the chapter on the techniques for diagnosis one of the best and think that it should be mandatory for clinicians, although it would also be helpful for pathologists, particularly because we can spend hours looking at computed tomography guided transthoracic needle biopsies when the result rarely changes the subsequent clinical management.

However, this book will have limited appeal for pathologists because it is covered in other texts (such as Brambilla and Brambilla) and does not consider technical aspects of molecular diagnosis.

P Hasleton

Morphology Methods: Cell and Molecular Biology Techniques

Lloyd RV, ed. (\$125.00.) Humana Press, 2001. ISBN 0 89603 955 2

There are books that provide theory and application and others that concentrate on practical methods. *Morphology Methods* tries, and for the most part succeeds, in combining both. Its focus is firmly on cellular pathology and, through 20 invited author chapters, all established areas of molecular biology and immunohistochemistry (IHC) are covered.

The reader will expect and find chapters on the practice and application of in situ hybridisation, the polymerase chain reaction (PCR), and IHC. Welcome additions include chapters on laser capture microdissection, confocal laser microscopy, in situ PCR, and clonality analysis. Those that concentrate on practice often include pearls of wisdom gleaned from hard bitten experience. Exceptional among these are the chapters covering fluorescence in situ hybridisation (FISH), PCR, and antigen retrieval. It would also be hard to find a better overview on the application of IHC to the diagnosis of undifferentiated tumours. Although these contributions may be regarded as exceptional, the overall quality is high, the emphasis is on clarity, and the references provided are always comprehensive.

As would be expected in any multi authored text there is a fair degree of repetition. For the most part this complements or reinforces points previously made. However, in the case of the separate descriptions for the ISH and IHC use of tyramide amplification methods this becomes irritating. Although the title of this book would suggest the inclusion of detailed protocols, this feature is variable. Some methods could be used directly at the bench, but others give guidance only. There also appears to be little evidence of a uniform policy being applied to their presentation. Overall, the quality of illustrations is good and some of these are reproduced in a colour plate section. Reference to the latter is essential for the liberally illustrated chapter on the application of IHC for the diagnosis of lymphoid lesions, where the monochromes are often hard to interpret.

In summary, this book should be read by/to all who are students or practitioners of cellular pathology, whether at the bench or at the

desk. Hopefully, a second edition will follow in due course providing descriptions of DNA and tissue arrays, together with the use of real time PCR.

T Warford

Principles of Molecular Rheumatology

Tsokos GC, ed. (£113.50.) Humana Press, 2000. ISBN 0 89603 773 8

When I initially looked through this book my first thoughts were "am I the right person to be reviewing this book?", at least in part because I have not bought a book of this kind since I was a PhD student. I have, however, bought a large rheumatology textbook since that time, but this is characterised by the scientific chapters using lots of large multicoloured pictures and covering the science in relatively simple terms.

This book covers a broad range of topics. It is set out in a very logical way, with the first two chapters covering areas of basic science and cellular immunology relevant to rheumatic disorders, and the final two chapters bringing these features together in relation to specific rheumatic conditions, and then moving on to treatment.

The quality of each chapter is extremely high. They are written by many of the leaders in the fields and are extremely concise and beautifully written. I particularly liked the chapters on apoptosis and adhesion and co-stimulation. It is perhaps no coincidence that these are some of the chapters with the most illustrations. If this book had been written in 2001 rather than 2000 I am sure there would have been a chapter on chemokines and their receptors.

I think that it is this that has created the uncertainty in my mind on two counts. This book is ostensibly aimed towards providing a better understanding of molecular and cellular aspects of rheumatic diseases, particularly geared to rheumatology clinicians in training. I suspect, however, that one of the good quality, highly illustrated, undergraduate texts is likely to be of greater benefit to this stated audience.

Where I could see a book like this being of great use is for somebody in the early stages of a PhD, wanting rapidly to gain a grasp of the field, but who already has some basic knowledge (this is precisely the sort of book I bought all those years ago during my PhD). There is no doubt that this is a superbly constructed and written book, but I think it is much more of a reference book for those wanting a detailed review of the subject than a bedtime read for those with a passing interest.

S Bowman



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P Hasleton

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