Contraction band necrosis

I read with interest the article by Hopster et al.1 Actually it was a recent editorial in the Lancet by Virmani et al2 that drew my attention to the paper by Hopster et al.

In both articles there was an accompanying figure showing contraction bands with myocytes. According to the legend to the fig 1 of the paper by Hopster et al, the transverse contraction bands were “most pronounced in the upper half of the figure”. Unfortunately, the figure was printed upside down, as the contraction bands were most pronounced in the lower half of the printed figure. For non-cardiovascular pathologists like me who are not familiar with contraction bands, this printing error created confusion. Of course, the best way would be to use arrows to indicate what the authors were referring to.

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Book reviews

Suspicious Death Scenes Investigation.


The Sherlokism, “You see, but you do not observe”, is softened at a crime scene by the realisation that (unless one was the perpetrator of the crime) it is remarkable to determine prospectively the importance of material found there. It seem wise to cover every angle, however oblique. It is hardly surprising that a book about death scene investigation will be repetitive and, if it is too small, must refer to more detailed works on specific types of scene.

In contrast with this repetition, some areas are somewhat perfunctorily covered: health and safety are of fundamental importance and everyday relevance, methods of locating human remains are sadly topical, while the future—in the shape of virtual reality reconstruction of a scene—is tantalising but, as the authors wisely indicate, perhaps dangerously attractive. Some extension of these areas and judicious excision of internal repetition would have enhanced the appeal of what is an easily admirable primer.

S LEADBETTER


The aim of this book is admirable. The advice is very good. Sadly, it fails to achieve the aims, largely because of the quality of the photographs, and some of the description of the illustrations do not clearly indicate what is intended. Figures 2.6, 2.7b and 2.8 clearly illustrate this failure. In Fig 2.6 we read that “a canvas of the adjacent building provided the identity of the victim”. How could it do so? We are not told. Figure 2.7b does not show anything more than a seemingly out of focus jumble of legs and what looks like debris. The tip of the knife in Fig 2.8 is missing, having been cut off by the photograph. This is a very important part of the weapon, because the penetration and the nature of the wound depend to some degree upon it. Much of the diagnosis in forensic medicine and pathology depends upon the accurate interpretation of what may be only subtle appearances, thus it is imperative that these are accurately recorded. The absence of any form of scale in most of the photographs and the use of black and white makes the illustrations of questionable value. As it says in Fig. 3.48, “photographs using a rule and a colour scale should be taken”. There are other criticisms which could be levelled, but to do so would only create the impression that there is nothing of value here and that would not be true. The concept is good, as is the advice. The check lists for the investigations of various types of death are most helpful. The variety and range of cases cited is commendably wide, covering a wide spectrum of forensic practice. What is needed to make it a good book is an improvement in the quality of the illustrations. In its present form, I cannot recommend it and that saddens me, as a good book of this type would be of great value to pathologists when faced with a forensic problem.

IAN R HILL

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Cytopathology for Histopathologists

February 3-7 1997

This is an intensive course in basic cytopathology suitable for all candidates preparing for the MRCPath and Diploma in Cytopathology examinations, as well as established histopathologists requiring revision. It is organised by the Department of Cellular Pathology, Northwick Park Hospital (Dr Eamon Leen). The programme will consist of lectures, microscopy sessions and discussions. Topics will include cytopathology of the cervix, urine, respiratory tract, serous effusions, and fine needle aspiration of lymph nodes, salivary glands, and other sites. In addition, keynote lectures will be given by Dr Amanda Herbert (Overview of cervical cytology screening) and Professor Sebastian Lucus/Dr Nick Francis (Cytology of infectious vaccines). The course is limited to 30 participants. Royal College of Pathologists’ approval for 29 CME credits is envisaged (as per 1996). The course fee is £350.00, which includes lunch, refreshments and a course dinner.

For further information, please contact: Dr Eamon Leen, Department of Histopathology, St Thomas’ Hospital, Northwick Park Hospital, Harrow HA1 3U. (Tel: 0181 869 3512; fax: 0181 864 1933.)

UMDS Dermatopathology Update

Friday February 21 1997

Venue: St Thomas’s Hospital, London
Morning—Melanocytic Tumours Update Speakers: RW Sagebiel, R Barnhill, M Cook, BM Maguire.
Afternoon—Pre-circulated slide seminar
For further information, please contact: Dr PH McKee, Department of Histopathology, St Thomas’s Hospital Medical School, Lambeth Palace Road, London, SE1 7EH. (Tel: 0171 928 9292 ext 2295; fax: 0171 922 8322.)

Postgraduate Course in Gynecologic and Obstetric Pathology

March 24-28 1997

The Departments of Pathology, Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Harvard Medical School, will present a postgraduate course in Gynecologic and Obstetric Pathology. The location is Barnes RE Scully, RH Young, CP Crum, to be held at the Four Seasons Hotel, Boston.

This five day course is designed primarily for pathologists and pathology residents, but will also be of interest to gynecologists with an interest in pathology. It will provide an in depth review of gynecological and obstetric pathology with emphasis on morphologic diagnostic features and clinicopathological correlation. Special attention will be paid to recent advances and newly recognised entities. Instruction will be primarily by lecture but will include discussion and slide review. A new feature of the course this year will be the opportunity to review glass slides of selected unusual cases in the laboratories of the Massachusetts General Hospital during the evenings. Each participant will receive a comprehensive course syllabus.

The course has Category I accreditation for approximately 36 hours CME credit by the American Medical Association. The fee for the course is $795.00 ($320) (residents and fellows $575.00 ($285)).

For further information, please contact: Department of Continuing Education, Harvard Medical School, 250 Longwood Avenue, Boston, MA 02115, USA. (Tel: 617 432 1525; fax: 617 432 1562.)
Contraction band necrosis.

T O Cheng

doi: 10.1136/jcp.49.12.1022-a

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