
If the senior author of this monograph appears to do less than justice to conventional staining methods, he is to be excused because of his enthusiasm for the silver techniques with which the name of his mentor, the late Don Pio del Rio Hertoga, will always be associated. Indeed the importance of this tome lies in the fact that these important techniques have been employed exhaustively—but not exclusively—in a study of 4,000 tumours of the nervous system. It will appeal particularly to pathologists and surgeons who are concerned with clinical and research aspects of neuro-oncology. When they compare their own findings with those of the authors, they may even be tempted to depart from some conventional teachings which have tended to neglect important writings of the Spanish school, so often buried as they are, in inaccessible journals.

These talented authors naturally base their classification of neoplasms on that of Hertoga but differ a little from Polak's recent modification (1966). They show with some conviction that 'medulloblastomas' are in fact neuroblastomas of the cerebellum and that their cerebral counterparts (usually called ganglioneuromas) do not contain gliomatous elements ('gangliogliomas') as others have postulated in some instances. They found no examples of sarcomatous change in the stroma of any of their cases of glioblastoma and they tend to discount the likelihood of there being such a tumour as a 'gliosarcoma'. More surprising is the fact that, not doubting the existence of such a tumour, they met with no instance of a 'microglioma' (with which they would not in any case be concerned in this book although Polak included them in his classification). Their challenging technical approach throws interesting light on the natural history and structure of Schwannomas, Remak cell tumours in von Recklinghausen's disease, haemangioblastosomas, gliomas of the optic nerve, tumours containing the elements of Fânanas, pinealomas, and the hamartomas and blastomatous processes met with in tuberose sclerosis, but their assessment of the spongiosoblastoma polare would appear to be at variance with the generally accepted view, supported by findings in tissue culture, of Russell and Rubinstein (1963).

A particularly useful chapter deals with the value as well as the shortcomings of tissue culture in diagnosis. There is too a technical section designed to tempt the routine worker into the fuller historical life. The innumerable illustrations are mostly good and some excellent; particularly interesting are the revealing phase contrast photographs of gliomas stained with silver carbonate. The text is set out with little regard to economy of paper but it is eminently readable in spite of the use of such words as 'silver-affine', 'semi-oval center', 'dynamic gliology', 'tumorigenic', and 'cariotaxis'. If at times statements are a little dogmatic they are none the less pleasingly provocative. The paper is heavy yet some illustrations are poor or is it the reproduction? On a few pages the text shows through on to the illustrations to the detriment of both; when reprinted it is hoped that this annoyance will be eradicated.

W. H. McMENEMEY


This is a worthy successor to the slim but authoritative fascicle by the late A. P. Stout. It has trebled in size and in the number of illustrations including a considerable amount of new material and covers the subject fully.

Both the solitary benign tumours of nerve sheaths and the various manifestations of neurofibromatosis receive full treatment. The terminology adopted is admirable, in particular the use of the term Schwannoma in preference to the numerous more elegant but ambiguous alternatives. The differences between Schwannoma and neurofibroma are well explained with the aid of diagrammatic drawings. Syndromes related to, but not identical with, von Recklinghausen's disease are well described and defined. The difficult subject of malignant nerve sheath tumours is clearly presented and an adequate classification proposed. The borderland between nerve sheath and melanotic tumours remains as obscure as ever. The neuroblastic and neuronal tumours are well reviewed and their terminology clarified. A clear statement on their sites of origin, including atypical ones, would be desirable: a curious omission. The chapter on 'Tumours of other tissues secondarily involving the peripheral nervous system' is so perfunctory it could have been omitted altogether.

The standard of illustrations is very high throughout. Lists of references at the end of each chapter provide a useful survey of recent work; however, they are rarely quoted in the text which makes correlation between statements and their original sources difficult. These are, however, minor flaws in an authoritative and up-to-date monograph.