Correspondence

T cells in idiopathic hypert eosinophilic syndrome

Following the recent publication by Dr Metz and colleagues, I have corresponded with regard to the possibility that the hyper eosinophilic syndrome (HES) may be a manifestation of Tp2 cell clonal proliferation. Just before the publication of my letter, substantial proof for this hypothesis was provided by Cogan et al. Investigations on peripheral blood lymphocytes from a 30 year old man with the HES identified rearrangement of the T cell receptor β chain. The cultured T cell clone also showed a pattern of cytokine synthesis (interleukins 4 and 5) consistent with a Tp2 origin. This important case report adds further documentary evidence to the rapidly increasing proof that human T cells have Tp1 and Tp2 subsets analogous to their established murine counterparts. Furthermore, this division seems to be highly relevant to the classification and pathogenesis of human T cell associated disease.

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This book is part of the well known series International Histological Classification of Tumours which was a collaborative effort, organised by the World Health Organisation, to facilitate the widespread adoption of a uniform cancer nomenclature. The first edition (No 6 in the series) was produced in 1972 and this second edition is now published by Springer. Sadly, Dr Schajowicz died soon after the completion of this book and this could not have been published without his enthusiasm and careful approach. There is a real need for this book now that a new classification is available. The book is divided into 17 chapters which cover the histological classification of bone tumours, and there are sections on the characterization of bone tumours by immunohistochemical, ultrastructural, and other methods. The book is divided into two parts: the first part is devoted to the histological classification of bone tumours, with emphasis on the criteria used for diagnosis and the second part is devoted to the clinical aspects of bone tumours. The book is well illustrated with numerous histological sections, and there are also useful tables and charts which facilitate the use of the book. The book is intended for established cytopathologists, but the book is also purports to have a practical and clinical value as well. The book is a valuable addition to the library of any pathologist or clinician who deals with bone tumours.

J R SALSBURY


This multiauthor colour atlas is intended for those embarking on cytopathology, and for established cytopathologists. It is a well written, comprehensive book with 664 pages divided into 19 chapters. There is a clearly written text at the beginning of each chapter. No references are included in the text but there is a short bibliography at the end of each chapter. Differential diagnoses and pitfalls in diagnosis are outlined and where relevant, aspiration techniques and methods of specimen preparation are included. The authors have included not only basic lesions but also unusual or rare lesions presenting in a particular site.

The first chapter on general cytological principles deserves special mention. It explains fundamental aspects of cytology in detail and lays the ground for the recognition of cytological features described in the rest of the book. The book contains 1500 colour illustrations. Most of the pictures are of high quality and the figure legends provide detailed information with tips on diagnosis. Not only are the classic appearances of a particular lesion highlighted but the cytological variations encountered are also shown.

Sampling by skin scraping is mentioned in connection with the diagnosis of vulvar lesions. The method is also applicable in the diagnosis of superficial skin lesions elsewhere in the body and is of particular benefit in the diagnosis of basal cell carcinomas.

Many books and atlases on cytology have been published recently, and this specialty is growing. To achieve excellence in this field the basic groundwork has to be sound. This atlas will be a stepping stone towards that goal.

R OOMEN

Book reviews

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At the onset I must state that this book is principally written for radiologists. There are sections covering histology and fine needle aspiration cytology, but the bulk of the book concerns technical and practical aspects of obtaining satisfactory image guided biopsy samples and patient management.

The authors are arguably the world’s leading proponents of image guided needle biopsy sampling of impalpable breast lesions. Although somewhat evangelical in their promotion and enthusiasm about this technique, there is no doubt that the results obtained in their clinical setting are excellent. Their detailed approach and development of the techniques and promotion of multidisciplinary communication are laudable.

The process promoted by the authors makes use of a specialised probe table for stereotactic localisation couples with the Bard biopsy gun and needle. I suspect the cost of purchase of a prone table specifically for this procedure without a comparative trial between FNA and needle biopsy histology is likely to hinder its acceptance in the cost conscious UK environment. There is no doubt, however, that those wishing to try out this technology in an appropriate setting would find this book extremely valuable, particularly for the practical tips it provides.

The manufacturers of the prone table should be encouraged to provide prospective purchasers with a free copy.

This is a guide book for radiologists wishing to use stereotactic guided needle biopsy. I suggest pathologists who are approached about this technology by their colleagues in radiology could suggest they peruse this book but I could not recommend its purchase for histopathology laboratories.

IAN O ELLIS

An Introduction to Cervical Cytopathology. Video produced for the British Society of Clinical Cytology by Sheffield University Television. (60 minutes running time; £150.) BSCC Secretariat, Hayes, Middlesex, 1993.

In the present climate of concern about the widely publicised problems with the cervical screening programme, professional training and education need to be addressed. The British Society of Clinical Cytology has followed up its previous excellent video Taking Cervical Smears (1989) with An Introduction to Cytological Cervix.

The video was produced as an adjunct to training courses for cytoscreeners, trainee medical laboratory scientific officers, and junior pathologists. It also purports to be a video reference library. The presenter has a good speaking manner and his pace is easy to follow. The material is presented in sections. The first one starts with the rationale and practice of screening, the basic anatomy and history of the female genital tract, sampling techniques and laboratory organisation. The second section takes the viewer through the contents of a normal cervical smear, information on dysplasia, invasive carcinoma and glandular disease.

In the first section, which gives a good basic description of a normal cell, there are
minor inaccuracies such as the diagram of a cell with cilia all around the circumference rather than on the luminal surface. The rationale and practice of screening are well covered, with useful graphs incorporating data from our own and other cervical screening programmes.

The section on basic anatomy and histology is covered completely, although again a novice might assume from the diagrammatic representation that ovulation takes place simultaneously from both ovaries and the ova aggregate in the oviducts. The method of relating the histological sections to the relevant areas of the cervix is excellent and the photomicrographs are good.

Sampling techniques are discussed, but the slides are labelled after the smear was taken rather than just before. Laboratory procedures are well covered, but it might have been more appropriate to display an obviously fictional name on the slide. The cervical screening programme cannot afford to have any more mistakes made.

The second section, alluded to as the video reference library, does cover all the important topics but could be improved. Several of the photomicrographs are slightly fuzzy, ciliated endocervical cells and immature metaplastic squamous cells are not shown, neither is the "seduxus" demonstrated. Smear patterns should have been included. The list of specific infections includes rickettsiae for some unknown reason. The histology of CIN is covered in depth, but grades of dyskaryotic cells are shown, but I take exception to the statement that dyskaryotic cells contain abnormal numbers and forms of nucleoli. It is widely accepted internationally that the presence of nucleoli in dyskaryotic cells is an indicator of microinvasion/invasion. The section on glandular disease is very skimpy and the photomicrographs do not illustrate the features described—namely, vacuoles and acini.

This video is too elementary for trainee pathologists but will be useful for raw recruits to the cytology laboratory before they embark on the recommended four-week introductory course. There are not enough photomicrographs illustrating the numerous varieties of benign and abnormal cells and patterns seen in routine screening to describe it as a video reference library, especially in comparison with the CytoVision video training package which does precisely that.

My overall impression is that this video, which is well presented, is best suited to medical students and to practice nurses (who must be advised to also see the previous video Taking cervical smears for thorough instruction in technique).

GRACE McKEE


During the past decade the cytopathology library has expanded from a mere handful of textbooks, which were eagerly absorbed by the specialty, to a much wider selection from which pathologists will wish to choose. In the field of fine needle aspiration cytology Jennifer Young's volume will contend for first place, especially for those cytopathologists who want to see illustrations of May-Grünwald-Giemsa stained examples as well as the more conventional Papanicolaou and haematoxylin and eosin stains.

A wide range of systems is covered, including bone and soft tissues, the eye and its adnexa, and smear preparations of central nervous system material. The editor has maintained a consistency throughout the 21 chapters by 20 authors which include technical procedures, interpretation, diagnostic problems, advantages and limitations of cytopathology in the various systems and quantitative estimates of diagnostic accuracy. The prose style is discursive and so easy to read that lists of diagnostic features and differential diagnoses are not missed. The full treatment of non-neoplastic conditions of the salivary gland and the chapter on the biliary system and pancreas attract particularly favourable comment. Above all, the presentation in two columns of clearly printed text and the generous size, number, and quality of the figures provides a high standard throughout.

The photomicrographs are all in colour and the same size, in some comparisons—for example, between types of lymphoma—are easily made. However, there are a few important conditions which are not illustrated—notably lactation and tubular carcinoma in the chapter on the breast.

This is an excellent book which will be a good investment for any pathologist or departmental library where fine needle aspiration is practised or being developed.

E A HUDSON


This book is part of a series on target organ toxicology. For this reason, it deals principally with the role of chemicals in carcinogenesis with little mention of other agents, such as viruses or radiation. It is also a book clearly aimed at experimental animal toxicologists, with most of the chapters concentrating on specific animal models like hepatic tumours in rats or skin tumours in mice. The clinically orientated pathologist is likely to find this approach too narrow for his or her requirements but it will be useful to the specialist looking for a review of chemical carcinogens affecting a particular organ.

The book starts by reviewing the general principles of chemical carcinogenesis and then devotes chapters to organ systems covering liver, gastrointestinal tract, kidney, bladder, respiratory tract, skin, nervous system, male reproductive tract and haemopoietic system. The final chapter details how to perform and document necropsies on experimental animals. The best chapters for human pathologists are those on the gastrointestinal tract, respiratory system, and male reproductive tract.

My main criticism concerns the index. I'm sure that many pathologists might look up a particular chemical or drug in the index. However, much of the most useful information is tabulated and does not get into the index. For example, phenacetin features in at least three tables, indicating its putative role in human renal tumours, rodent bladder tumours, and rat nasal tumours. It is not mentioned in the index. Even drugs such as cyclophosphamide, which are included in the index, are only referenced where they occur in the text. This fairly simple fault will limit the use of this book.

SUSAN DILLY

Association of Clinical Pathologists Trainee Membership

Trainee membership of the Association is available to medical practitioners who are in training in pathology. Trainee members are able to remain in this category until they achieve consultant or other career grade status (this includes staff grades). The annual subscription is £32.50 for those resident in the United Kingdom and £75 for those overseas. The annual subscription may be claimed against tax.

Trainee members receive the Journal of Clinical Pathology each month. Other benefits are reduced registration fees to attend ACP scientific meetings, all the documents regularly sent to full members of the Association including ACP News, which has a regular column for trainees, and the twice yearly summary of pathology courses included in the ACP programme of postgraduate education.

Trainee membership has been a regular feature of the representative body, the Trainee Members' Group, which has a direct input to Council.

For Trainee Membership apply to: The Honorary Secretary, Association of Clinical Pathologists, 221 Preston Road, Brighton BN1 6SA. Tel: (0273) 561188. Fax: 0273 541227.