We thank Dr Nayler and Professor Cooper for their interest in our paper. In the South African context, history of perinatal infection is a major diagnostic consideration. We believe that our interpretation of the histologic features is consistent with an inflammatory pseudotumour. However, the presence of acid-fast bacilli in the specimen suggests the possibility of mycobacterial infection. Further studies are necessary to confirm this diagnosis.

In conclusion, the histologic findings in this case are consistent with a diagnosis of inflammatory pseudotumour. Further studies are necessary to confirm this diagnosis and exclude other potential causes. The presence of mycobacteria in the specimen suggests the possibility of mycobacterial infection. Further studies are necessary to confirm this diagnosis.

Book reviews


The first edition of this book was published under the title Gynaecological Pathology by Magnus Haines and Claude Taylor in 1963. Now a two volume, multi-author work Obstetrical and Gynaecological Pathology has expanded in just about every dimension with an exponential growth in the number of pages from 307 to the current 1851 (parabolic regression r² = 0.9).

This, the fourth edition includes nine additional chapters that clarify our understanding of the morphology of premalignant and malignant glandular lesions of the cervix, metastatic tumours of the cervix and endometrium, and the pathology of the peritoneum and secondary Müllerian system. A chapter on the pathology of the secondary yolk sac, an organ that I suspect few pathologists in this field recognize in routine practice, is also welcome. Inevitably, I expect that rapid scientific advance will ensure that the chapters on quantitative pathology, molecular biology, and immunohistochemistry will become rapidly dated and doomed to obscurity long before a fifth edition of this work will be available.

The standard of photography is somewhat variable but this is probably a common problem in multi-author texts, as it is the delay between the author completing the chapter and publication—the most recent reference I could find was from 1994. These were the most obvious flaws in what was to be a standard bench book, essential in every diagnostic anatomic pathology laboratory dealing with gynaecological specimens.

M H HEATLEY


The expected chapters for a book entitled “Principle and Practice of Medical Laboratory Science” are all here and include section preparation and staining, as well as microscopy. There is a helpful exposition on specimen cut-up procedures, which should appeal to junior pathologists and medical laboratory scientists alike. The overall flavour of the book is one of practical guidance, linked to diagnostic usefulness. Confusingly, the most substantial chapter entitled “Preparation of Tissue Sections” contains the staining methods. These also give the principles of the various reactions, but for some obscure reason this laudable precept seems to have been abandoned in the section on “Miscellaneous Stains”. Equally perplexing is why some solutions appear with the appropriate method, while others are shown only in the Appendix.

Particularly useful chapters are those covering light and electron microscopy, and diagnostic immunohistochemistry. The “Laboratory Safety” chapter addresses the topic helpfully and succinctly, but it is unfortunate that it fails to make the vital point that chlorite disinfectants are unsuitable for tuberculous material.

It is a rare text that is without error and this book is no exception—for example, on page 58 the reference for Harris’s haematoxylin would, by my calculations, result in Dr Harris having called the counterstain a nuclear stain; and on page 65 an incorrect formula for the standard alician blue solution would result in a too strong a stain by a factor of 15.

The book is soft-back with a reasonably large page size making it easy to use on the bench. A bold typeface is used for the main text but, irritatingly, a smaller, less distinct typeface is employed for legends to figures and the like. This tends to make for arduous reading and was exemplified by the algorithm on page 116 (fig 6.6) that was virtually incomprehensible.

In summary, the book is well written in an authoritative style that conveys a feeling of confidence that the author knows what he is about. The price is a relatively modest one.

On the other hand, its appeal is always going to be a limited one—given its restricted subject coverage. Therefore, it is unlikely to serve as a reference book, either in laboratory or college terms. As a bench book its value is readily apparent but it is not quite comprehensive enough to be used alone. The main appeal will undoubtedly be for the histiologist who require a straightforward, reliable, and above all comprehensive guide to its mysteries. The trouble is that this type of publication tends to be passed on by the possessor to oncoming neophytes, as opposed to their purchasing a new copy; a scenario guaranteed to engender melancholia in publishers.
If there is any department that reports trephines and does not own the first edition, then the second edition is an essential purchase. I have tried to do a "spot the difference" between the two editions to decide whether owners of the first edition should upgrade. The chapter titles are unchanged and most of the photographs and tables are the same. This is not a major rewrite but there are significant differences in areas such as immunocytochemistry and lymphoma classification. The REAL classification is included and compared with the Kiel and Working Formulation. Useful new antibodies are discussed, and a technical appendix has been added. Several pages are devoted to a new section on artefacts that should be particularly useful to haematologists who are less likely to be familiar with the artefacts common to formalin fixed, paraffin wax embedded sections.

The book emphasises an integrated approach for reaching a diagnosis. There is no place for a histopathologist reporting the trephine in ignorance of the aspirate's appearance but it is also unsatisfactory if the trephine goes straight to the haematologist. The combination of good quality trephine sections and this book should encourage histopathologists to participate in this fascinating and demanding field. Haematologists reading this book will appreciate the additional information that can be gleaned from good quality sections and this may influence their attitude towards taking trephines.

DILLY

Notices

Histopathology of the bone marrow
Wednesday 17 September 1997
Imperial College School of Medicine,
St Mary's, London, UK

A one day course suitable for career post holders and trainees in haematology and histopathology.

Numbers restricted to 40; CME approved (7 credits); cost £85 (including lunch).

Applying in writing enclosing a cheque (payable to Imperial College) to Jenny Guy, Postgraduate Course Organiser, Postgraduate Medical Centre, 2nd Floor, Mint Wing, St Mary's Hospital, London W2, UK.

Second meeting of the European Study Group on
Cutaneous Lymphoma
Wednesday 15 October 1997
Kurfurst Hotel, The Hague, Netherlands

Registration is free.

For further information contact Prof. Dr. M Altweeck, Department of Microbiology, University of Zurich, Glori stratasse 30, CH-8028 Zürich, Switzerland. (Fax: +41 (1) 252 8107.)

Correction

Proliferation index—a comparison between cutaneous basal and squamous cell carcinomas
Reference 2 in this letter should have read: De Vico G, Agrimi U, Maiolino P. Nucleolar size and mitotic index in basal cell carcinomas (BCC) and squamous cell carcinomas (SCC) of canine skin. Journal of Veterinary Medicine series A 1995;42:339–43.

and not as published. The error is regretted.

Supraregional Assay and Advisory Service

In response to tenders received, the following laboratories have been designated to offer the Supraregional Assay and Advisory Service:

- **Porphyria metabolism**
  - King’s College School of Medicine and Dentistry, Department of Clinical Biochemistry, Bessmer Road, London SE5 9PJ.
  - Professor T J Peters, tel: 0171 737 3008; fax: 0171 737 7434.
  - University Hospital of Wales NHS Trust Laboratory, Heath Park, Cardiff CF4 4XW.
  - Professor G H Elder, tel: 01222 742799 (laboratory); 01222 743565; fax: 01222 766276.

- **Supraregional Assay and Advisory Service**
  - The standard of the responses to the invitations to tender was very high and the Supraregional Assay and Advisory Service Board compliment the laboratories who bid for these assays.
  - Professor V Marks, Dean of Medicine, Chairman, SAAS Management Executive Board, EIHMS, University of Surrey, Stirling House Campus, Surrey Research Park, Guildford GU2 5RF.

Practical adult cardiovascular pathology course
Monday 17 November 1997

This practical, hands on course approaches in detail the problems that face diagnostic pathologists when dealing with cardiovascular pathology. The approach to cardiac autopsy and sudden death will be emphasised. Cardiac specimens will be made available for dissection and analysis, and practical demonstrations as well as video demonstrations will be highlighted. A slide seminar is also included.

The course is aimed at trainees studying for the MRCPath as well as senior pathologists who wish to update their knowledge.

Course fee: £125 including coffee, tea and lunch (£100 for juniors in training).

For further details contact the National Heart and Lung Institute, Dovehouse Street, London SW3 6LY, UK. (Tel: 0171 351 8172; fax: 0171 376 3442.)

WAGSTAFF


It was a pleasure to review the second edition of "Bone Marrow Pathology" knowing how useful the first edition has proved. For those not familiar with the book, it is an ideal practical book for all haematologists and histopathologists involved in reporting bone marrow aspirates and trephines.

It has a clear layout with good quality colour photomicrographs of an appropriate mixture of cytological and histological appearances. The chapters work methodically through the normal marrow, infective and reactive conditions, the various haematological and lymphoid malignancies, disorders of haemopoiesis, metastatic tumours, and bone disorders. There are useful tables and graphs of normal values, grading systems, classification of leukaeasias and lymphomas, suitable antibody panels, etc. The text is easy to read and with a wealth of practical comments related to the authors’ experience.

Correction

Proliferation index—a comparison between cutaneous basal and squamous cell carcinomas
Reference 2 in this letter should have read: De Vico G, Agrimi U, Maiolino P. Nucleolar size and mitotic index in basal cell carcinomas (BCC) and squamous cell carcinomas (SCC) of canine skin. Journal of Veterinary Medicine series A 1995;42:339–43.

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