

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of *Muir's Textbook of Pathology*

REFERENCE: Anderson, J. R., *Muir's Textbook of Pathology*, Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago, Ill., 1976, 1046 pages, \$29.95.

According to the preface, this book is intended as an illustrated text of pathology suitable for medical students, yet sufficiently comprehensive for graduate trainees. Both should be quite well served by this multi-authored textbook. The organization is traditional general pathology progressing to systemic pathology, with some duplication which is cross-referenced with paginations. A number of outstanding sections are clear, lucid, and well illustrated. These are of the quality that should admirably serve as a "review of current concepts" for the practicing (forensic) pathologist. Particularly impressive is the section on the respiratory system, while the sections on the immune response, immunopathology, bone repair, pyrexia, and radiation injury are excellent although not exhaustive. Other sections of this textbook do not share these strengths. Congenital heart disease and viral diseases are given short shrift; the breast section is marred by poor illustration, and breast malignancies are classified as "spheroidal-cell" and "encephaloid" carcinoma, a classification somewhat at variance with that of the World Health Organization.

All 1015 pages of text are well printed and easily readable. The abundant and appropriate illustrations are generally excellent black-and-white and well captioned. The $\times 65$ illustration of a Koplik spot was disappointing, and the histology of the scrotal carcinoma in a chimney sweep was not clear, but this is picking at nits for the pictures are quite clear in most sections.

There is very little on trauma as viewed from the standpoint of the forensic pathologist, but this is not the stated objective of this volume. However, in this reviewer's opinion, it is poorly referenced with only four pages labeled "Suggestions for Further Reading and Consultation" immediately preceding the index. A paucity of references is a frailty of which I despair in many otherwise excellent books also published in Great Britain. No doubt the authors and the editor are most honorable persons with unquestioned veracity. But one should know the specific references for statements such as "effective repair of heart muscle occurs in young patients with Coxsackie virus infections or diphtheria" or "fat extends through the heart wall, and leads to atrophy of the muscle fibers with consequent weakening of the wall to such an extent that the right ventricle may rupture." Also, the definition of necrobiosis (page 2) as "cell death preceded by gradual and potentially reversible damage" is not generally accepted.

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These flaws detract from a textbook that is well organized, illustrated, and indexed; a very readable book with overall content that is above average; a good book, useful as both a text and a reference. But this book could be improved by a more critical editorial review.