

Book Reviews

Rosen's Breast Pathology

Edited by Paul P. Rosen, MD. Lippincott-Raven Publishers, Philadelphia, PA, 1996. ISBN 92 4 1561 84X

Breast pathology is one of the most frequently encountered in any pathology practice, and there has always been a need for a textbook that exhaustively covers all the aspects of breast diseases. This book edited by Dr. Rosen comes closest to fulfilling this requirement.

The book not only covers all aspects of benign and malignant diseases of the breast in an encyclopedic fashion, but also discusses these diseases in an impartial and objective way, with the inclusion of all points of view, especially on controversial issues such as atypical ductal hyperplasia. The book also attempts to dispel many myths deeply entrenched in the practice of surgical pathology of the breast. This is nicely illustrated in the discussion of the cell of origin of Paget's disease.

The book has several unique features, including a detailed clinical description of almost every disease mentioned. It also describes evolving management concepts with a nice historical perspective. One feature which I liked in particular was the elaborate discussion of difficult and controversial issues. An example is the discussion of precancerous lesions of the breast in Chapter 10. Diagnostic pitfalls and fine-needle aspiration findings are mentioned whenever appropriate.

The book consists of 50 chapters divided into six parts. The first part (Chapters 1-4) covers the anatomy and embryology of the breast, as well as specific infections. The second part (Chapters 5-8) covers benign breast diseases, including fibrocystic diseases and benign neoplasms. The third part (Chapters 9-12) discusses precancerous lesions, including hyperplasia and carcinoma in situ and the controversies associated with them. The fourth and largest part (Chapters 13-41) discusses all aspects of breast carcinoma. The fifth part (Chapters 42-43) discusses benign and malignant mesenchymal tumors of the breast. The final part (Chapters 44-50) covers several miscellaneous issues related to the breast, including a chapter on fine-needle aspiration of the breast. This section also includes a chapter covering the proper methods of handling breast specimens.

The book is very well written with up-to-date references and appropriate sections discussing molecular techniques and their implication in breast cancer. One additional unique feature of the book is the inclusion of many low-power photomicrographs denoting the importance of recognizing histological patterns.

If there is any flaw in the book at all, it would be the sometimes long discussion of very rare pathological

entities of the breast. But this is not to belittle the great deal of effort and expertise put into this book. I strongly recommend it for every pathology department's library.

Walid A. Mourad, MD, FRCPC
Department of Pathology and
Laboratory Medicine (MBC-10)
King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre
P.O. Box 3354
Riyadh 11211, Saudi Arabia

Cancer in the Elderly: A Nursing and Medical Perspective

Edited by K. Redmond and M.S. Aapro. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science BV. ISBN 0444-82858-3

For the last dozen years, Fellows in my Hematology-Oncology training program have asked me, "If I want to have an academic career, what area of Hematology/Oncology should I emphasize?" And for at least ten years, my unhesitating and invariable answer has been: "Geriatric Oncology." This reply has never failed to elicit surprise and cries for explanation, but regrettably it has not yet succeeded in convincing a Fellow to follow my advice.

Cancer in the elderly, the topic of this second monograph in a new series from the European School of Oncology (ESO), is the next great frontier in oncology research. As this 98-page booklet concisely summarizes, cancer in the elderly is a demographic brush fire driven by the twin winds of decreasing cardiovascular mortality and rapid population increase in the over-70 age group. And, at least in North America, we are not well prepared for the demands that will be made on the health care system by a large cohort of otherwise healthy oldsters with newly diagnosed malignant neoplasms.

Why are we not prepared? In North America the traditional practice in the design of cancer therapy clinical trials has been to exclude individuals over 70 years of age. Some aggressive chemotherapy trials have used upper age limits of 65 (breast cancer), 60 (acute leukemia), or even 40-50 (marrow transplantation). While these restrictions were motivated by genuine concerns about the marrow therapeutic ratios of some cytotoxic chemotherapy regimens, the result has been the systematic exclusion of potential new knowledge about cancer therapy in older patients. Only recently (perhaps as oncologists themselves began to approach old age?) has this deficiency been recognized and clinical trials without upper age limits initiated.

Cancer in the Elderly: A Nursing and Medical Perspective represents the results of a study group or task force sponsored by ESO, wherein "leading experts exchange views on the state of the art of a given field,

discuss controversies and new developments, and give opinions on future directions.” In seven well-chosen chapters, the seven multidisciplinary and multinational authors provide an overview of the problem with emphasis on patient care and cancer treatment in the elderly. (Interestingly, the editors do not list the specific authors of the individual chapters, a way of emphasizing the collaborative nature of the book.) Both medical and nursing care are emphasized, reflecting the disciplines of the authors, three of whom are nurses.

The strength of the booklet lies in its readability—at 98 pages, it can be read in an evening—and in the timeliness of its subject matter. Its principal weakness is the lack of hard data in the field.

Repeatedly, the authors are forced to temper their

conclusions due to a lack of prospective studies, a limited amount of information, or a lack of evidence that certain data apply to the elderly as well as to the younger population. This is not a flaw of the book, but a fault of investigators worldwide.

Who should buy this book? I should buy this book so that I can lend it to the next Fellow who seeks career advice. It also deserves a place on the shelves of physician and nurse educators and in medical libraries.

Robert Stuart, MD

Department of Oncology (MBC-64)

King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre

P.O. Box 3354

Riyadh 11211, Saudi Arabia