

Cellular Pathology

An introduction to techniques and applications

D. J. Cook. Bloxham, Oxon: Scion Publishing (2nd edn), 2006: 384pp.
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The recent past has seen major developments in many of the professional aspects that relate to the pre-registration and pre-specialist training of biomedical scientists, and these are certainly not exclusive to cellular pathology practice. Change of this nature demands the constant updating of learning materials so that they fully support the needs of current students seeking to acquire the basic elements related to the principles and practice of applying biomedical science in the diagnostic laboratory.

Relevant and current specialist textbooks aimed at the undergraduate market in the area of cellular pathology are very much in short supply. The author has set out to revise and extend the successful first edition (published in 1998), following the premise that there are already sufficient existing titles that solely provide general histological demonstration methods without giving a full explanation of the principles involved.

In this second edition, the author provides a concise and highly relevant exposition of the key areas of practice, such as fixation, microtomy, staining theory, microscopy and laboratory organisation. These are invaluable as

introductions to the concepts of why things are done the way that they are in diagnostic histopathology and cytopathology laboratories. There is also coverage of areas pertinent to cytogenetics and molecular genetics. There are no superfluous sections; however, whether or not autoradiography is still a relevant technique could be questioned, although there is merit in its inclusion as a forerunner of molecular techniques. Compared with the first edition, the diagrams are now larger and more plentiful, providing a lucid explanation of, for example, immunological technique (Chapter 10) and microscopy (Chapter 15).

The reader-friendly format is ideally suited to current learning principles. Each major topic is introduced with clear learning objectives and there are regular summary boxes that serve to highlight the most significant of these. There are also plentiful opportunities through self-assessment exercises for the student to check their own personal progress.

Overall, this textbook is to be recommended for the specialist and non-specialist alike, and especially for those wishing to develop an informed and practical approach to cellular pathology practice.

P Warren