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Transplant pathology

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This book, from the press of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists, with contributions from 33 authors, nicely achieves its goal of serving "as a starting point for those who have just begun a career in caring for patients with transplants, and [...] as a reference for more experienced pathologists in areas in which they may not have as much experience".

To cover the broad field of clinical transplantation, including basic knowledge of immune response, the HLA system, tissue typing, immunosuppression, rejection, opportunistic infections, post-transplant malignancies, graft versus host disease, and the specific problems in renal, heart, lung, hepatic, pancreas and bone marrow transplantation in a book of 341 pages seems an impossible goal. Yet, the authors have succeeded surprisingly well. In 16 short chapters the book supplies a practical guide to the basic knowledge necessary for gaining insight into the clinical situation of the graft recipient and into both the general and more specific problems in separate fields of clinical transplant pathology. The book is edited in an attractive way with a broad margin that leaves room for many of the tables and black and white figures. The chapters on basic immunological aspects and immunosuppression provide a satisfactory introduction, and the many references enable the reader to select additional information. Unfortunately, references from publications later than 1990 are relatively scarce. The black and white figures and diagrams are, in general, rather good; the sep-

arate chapters on solid organ and bone marrow transplantation are accompanied by a generous number of color microphotographs, many of excellent quality.

In chapter 1, entitled "The pathophysiology of rejection", an introduction is given to the basic mechanisms of allograft recognition and rejection. There is some imbalance in the part dealing with bone marrow transplantation: too much specialized information is given that is not well integrated into the remaining part of the text. The chapter on opportunistic infections gives an overview of the micro-organisms that are most frequently involved and of the various methods for diagnosis. Most of the color illustrations in this chapter are beautiful examples of diagnostic stainings. However, for a second edition, I would recommend including, as a quick reference for the pathologist, a table listing the most appropriate diagnostic histological or cytologic staining procedures for the various micro-organisms, including available antibodies for immunostaining and additional techniques, such as *in situ* hybridization and PCR. It would also be wise to mention that a restricted number of staining procedures for opportunistic infections should be performed as standard procedures in nongraft biopsies or aspirates of all transplant recipients, irrespective of clinical indication, since, in many cases, opportunistic infection is not suspected and not visible in routine stainings. The section dealing with post-transplant lymphoproliferative disease presents, in a clear and concise way, information on pathogenesis, clinical presentation, and the variable morphology of these lymphoid proliferations. For the inexperienced pathologist, these lesions may have a benign histological appearance; yet, they should be recognized before widespread disease or incurable monoclonal lymphoma becomes apparent.

The chapters dealing with the special aspects of solid organ transplantation concentrate on pathology, with special atten-

tion to the handling and processing of graft biopsies and the histological diagnosis of rejection. In general, the quality of the illustrations relating to histology are good; however, those in the section on renal transplantation are somewhat inferior. For example, the histological pictures of tubulitis, acute endarteritis, and chronic transplant glomerulopathy are not entirely satisfactory; the legends are not always to the point and the immunofluorescence does not provide all of the information that is necessary. I would also have preferred inclusion of a table summarizing the criteria and the grading system of the Banff Classification. Despite its shortcomings, it is the only international schema available. With some adaptations, it will probably become the most commonly used classification in the coming years. For heart and lung allograft biopsies, the working formulations for the grading of rejection are given in the respective chapters.

Transplant Pathology is an attractive, compact handbook that fills the gap between more general reviews, on the one hand, and information that is too detailed for use in clinical practice, on the other. It gives newcomers to the field a helpful introduction and offers the clinician or the pathologist who is not a specialist in the field quick access to the special problems encountered by transplant recipients. The book provides excellent value for the money, and I recommended it highly, both as a valuable addition to the libraries of clinical and pathology departments and as a practical handbook for the clinical pathologist.

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