

## Histopathology Specimens: Clinical, Pathological and Laboratory Aspects

Derek C. Allen and R. Iain Cameron. Springer, 2004: pp 519.  
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This text is a welcome addition to the field of the sampling and evaluation of histopathology specimens and is of interest to the pathologist and biomedical scientist alike.

The opening few pages clearly project the importance of appropriate and adequate tissue sampling and the pivotal role of laboratory-based investigations in the overall process of histopathological tissue assessment. Emphasis is placed on the holistic significance such processes have on patient prognosis and subsequent clinical management.

There are 12 chapters covering the length, breadth, depth and nature of the histopathological specimen. Each chapter deals logically and systematically with anatomical issues, clinical presentations, clinical investigations, pathological conditions and the surgical aspects involving both clinical and laboratory-based procedures. There are 129 figures throughout the text: most are perfectly adequate, some have reasonably detailed annotations, whereas others appear more schematic.

There is a miscellaneous specimens chapter that deals with more selective procedures, some of which encompass cytological sampling, frozen section usage and the

application of ancillary techniques such as sampling for flow cytometry, *in situ* hybridisation, electron microscopy, cytogenetics or molecular genetics and proteomics. There is a bibliography, which cites several reference points for each of the chapters.

The majority of the content is up to date and accurately portrays the importance of thorough and precise evaluation of histopathological samples in the overall care of the patient. In addition, the text provides a useful glossary of abbreviations, covering all the chapters, which commonly appear on most histopathology clinical request forms.

The text is an *aide memoire* rather than a reference text. It does not attempt to provide detailed information but rather gives a more generalised overview. Some chapters appear too brief and barely scratch the surface in respect of eye, muscle and nerve specimens. Arguably, such areas of histopathology have become increasingly more specialised. There is also an understating of some of the more recent laboratory-based techniques for the evaluation of the histopathology specimen. A prime example is the scant reference to the significance of sentinel lymph node biopsy for the assessment of metastatic malignant disease. The chapters dealing with breast and skin make brief reference to its value in the overall assessment of metastatic disease.

The strength of this text is that it is concise, informative to a reasonable degree and offers the reader an opportunity to understand the concepts and principles before becoming more involved with detail. □

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