Pathology and Pathophysiology of AIDS and HIV-related Diseases


The astonishing growth in knowledge about AIDS and HIV infections within the past decade seems to be slowing down with research efforts now concentrating on three main aspects—fundamental virology, therapeutic drugs, and the development of a vaccine. There is a large accumulation of information about the tissue pathology of AIDS, and the editors have chosen an appropriate time to produce this book. A conventional systematic approach has been followed with a strong emphasis on clinicopathological correlations, strengthened by inclusion of clinical pictures and computerised tomographic scans. Three introductory chapters deal with epidemiology, immunology, and virology. There is a useful section on classification and staging of HIV infections. Separate chapters discuss AIDS in children and AIDS in Africa. The various system-based accounts of AIDS and AIDS-related pathology are well written and illustrated. Emphasis on the practical problems of differential diagnosis is welcome. The remarkable variations of AIDS between different susceptible groups is made abundantly clear. The text includes references up to mid-1988. The index works. The one section that fell short of expectation was (surprisingly) the introductory chapter on HIV itself. More detail would have been welcome—for example, on the HIV receptors on T4 lymphocytes and mononuclear cells and, particularly in this book, a fuller account of how HIV can be demonstrated in tissues. There are a few other minor irritations: too many abbreviations, missing magnifications for most light photomicrographs, no illustration for CMV infection in the chapter on the lungs, and scattered misprints. But overall, the authors have produced an excellent book which will be valuable to a wide range of clinicians and pathologists.

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A Practical Guide to Clinical Teaching in Medicine


Teaching has never had a high reputation in medical schools. A Lancet editorialist summed it up: “Patients first, research second, teaching third”. Clinical students are mainly taught by junior medical staff who are themselves being taught for higher examinations. Needless to say few teachers have been taught to teach. If you are bright, have a postgraduate diploma, and can do research you are also assumed to be a good teacher. Experience belies that assumption.

What should you do, as a doctor in training, if you have been asked to teach the junior clinical students in 10 days’ time? Will this book give the practical help its title promises? Not really. Although good clinical teachers are described as “enthusiastic, clear and well-organised, and adept at personal interaction”, the book lacks those virtues. Its stodgy, verbose, plodding prose eventually tempts what the authors might describe as “an interactive author-reader duologue in which cover-approximating behaviour coupled with associated negative emotions results in premature closure of the encounter”. There are bon mots—“To teach is to learn twice” and “Some pictures are worth a thousand words, but a picture of a thousand words is not worth much”. But there is also mind-blowing banality: “some content is best presented visually: X-rays, diagrams and pictures” and “We do know that learning is a cerebral process, probably electrochemical in nature”—now that is going to be useful in preparing for those junior students on Thursday week. The clichéd hippocratic aphorism forming the last chapter’s epigram mutates spontaneously: art is short, the book long.

So what to do; how do you prepare for the students? I would consult Newble and Cannon’s A Handbook for Clinical Teachers (MTP Press, 1987). It will give you at least a dozen ideas for Thursday week.

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New Editions


