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Book Review

Mills SE, Gaffey MJ, Frierson HF Jr: *Tumors of the Upper Aerodigestive Tract and Ear, Atlas of Tumor Pathology, 455 pp, Washington, DC, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, 2000 (\$95.00).*

Even if one were to disregard the price, this would still be my first choice among several pretty good books on ENT tumors that appeared in print recently. I simply do not see how this topic could be covered any better. The only thing that I did not like was the title! ('Upper'—does that mean that there is also a 'lower' aerodigestive tract? I could not find this term in two of my medical dictionaries, but I'd better stop arguing lest somebody think that I am full of air!)

All the rest is, however, just as one would have expected from a team headed by Dr. Mills. Their approach is extremely methodical and comprehensive. The text flows seamlessly, and it is a pleasure to read—it is not only didactic but also entertaining. Most readers will appreciate the unpretentious but authoritative approach to tumor diagnosis. One cannot help but wonder how much personal experience these authors have condensed into the declarative sentences stockpiled in this book. There is a good balance between important common tumors and less

common ones that become important only when you cannot recognize them. Illustrations are excellent, except for a few black and white pictures (taken over from other sources or the previous edition of this atlas) and an occasional gross clinical picture. These are, however, only minor blemishes that should not detract from this excellent book. I mentioned it here to show that I can be critical, and also to let the authors know that I could have lived without a clinical picture of an accessory tragus or branchial cleft cyst in a tumor book.

Atlases are supposed to be visual aids, and their forte lies typically in the illustrations. There is no question that Dr. Mills and his associates have fulfilled this postulate and produced an excellent atlas. I am, however, at a loss in deciding whether the pictures are better than the text or vice versa. If the text is better, would that transform it into a textbook? To understand my dilemma, please buy the book and decide for yourself whether you want to use it as an atlas or a textbook.

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