

Book Review

Jaime Prat: Pathology of the Ovary, 330 pp, Philadelphia, Saunders (an imprint of Elsevier), 2004 (\$129).

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'I have made this letter longer than usual', wrote Blaise Pascal in 17th century, 'only because I have not had time to make it shorter'. Dr Prat obviously blocked out more than enough time from his busy schedule to write what he had to tell us—his book is admirably short and to the point. He took some time not only to decide on what to include, but also what to delete, what to emphasize and what to mention only in passing. He managed to accomplish something that has eluded so often so many writers: to be concise yet comprehensive, relevant but not superficial, practice oriented but still firmly grounded in basic sciences. For all this he deserves high praise.

Dr Prat is a first class pathologist, an experienced teacher, and a skilled medical writer. Dr Scully, his teacher, who wrote the introduction to this book, did not fail to notice that Dr Prat is also one of those leading pathologists who feel equally at home in classic pathology and molecular biology of gynecologic tumors. His writing is crisp and the messages contained in his terse sentences are direct and authoritative. The important facts are repeated in summary boxes and illustrated with well-chosen color photographs. Since the emphasis is on diagnostic pathology, no wonder that the key clinical-pathologic aspects of gynecologic tumors

account for the contents of most of these boxes. Busy surgical pathologists will find these summary boxes very attractive, and the residents will love them. A personal experience tells it all: the first day that I left my copy of the book in the residents' room, one of them took it and copied almost all the pages that contained exactly those boxes.

Personally, what I liked the most is Dr Prat's didactic no-nonsense approach and his focus on the essentials. The book covers in a concise form the entire gynecologic pathology. The pathologic entities are presented systematically, and the crucial macroscopic, microscopic, immunohistochemical or molecular biology findings are described in short paragraphs. Illustrations, mostly culled from the author's own files, or are all in color—suffice to say that they could not be better. The references are current and critically selected.

This book belongs to the category of single-author medical textbooks. This *rara avis* is almost at the brink of extinction due to our hectic life style and the pernicious consumerism preaching that more is better. The book appears slim, but take my word, it contains more wisdom than many much, much thicker encyclopedias on the same subject. I recommend this jewel of a book to all interested in gynecologic pathology, but primarily practicing pathologists and gynecologists, and their residents.

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