

Book Review

Odze RD, Goldblum JR, Crawford JM: *Surgical Pathology of the GI Tract, Liver, Biliary Tract, and Pancreas*, 1067 pp, Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 2004 (\$259).

Modern Pathology (2005) 18, 598. doi:10.1038/modpathol.3800340

If you visit Google, and type in 'mouse trap' you will get 510 000 entries, as well a list of all the new electronic gadgets for catching the rodent. The urge to invent a new mouse trap must have been ingrained into our gene and appears to be a basic human instinct prone to surface in many other forms. Nowhere has that urge been more evident, at least from my slightly biased position, than in the field of gastrointestinal (GI) pathology. I say 'biased' because on my shelves I have five major textbooks of GI pathology and five books of hepatopathology, and several monographs devoted to one or another part of this organ system. In addition, I have several clinical GI/hepatology and general surgical pathology texts, each of which contains a good pathology section, more than adequate for my daily consultations.

The question, do we really need another textbook of GI pathology, is almost as irrelevant as if one were to ask whether we need yet another mouse trap. Even though the answer must be positive, since I have the new textbook in my hands, I must admit that it did not come to me so readily. However, over the 2 or 3 months that I used the book, I came full circle and decided that it is really nice to have it in my office. Even my residents developed the habit of reaching first for the 'Odze'—a compliment to the authors and an implicit endorsement that no readers of these lines should miss!

On my road to Damascus, I first decided to read five chapters, chosen at random, and keep a score: If I find at least five new tidbits or 'pearls' or 'fascinomas' in each of these chapters, I will write a positive review. If not (since I do not like to write bad reviews and make unnecessary enemies among my colleagues), I would keep my comments to myself and find another reviewer. Since I am writing, the reader will surmise that the five chosen chapters have 'made the cut' and met my criteria. Actually they have surpassed them, and thus I am

pleased to be in the position to most enthusiastically recommend this new addition to the gastrointestinal literature.

First of all, the book is beautifully laid out and physically very attractive. Glossy, heavy duty paper, all color photographs, colored schematic drawings, tables with color background, text in a readable font, additional color lines on the top of each page, just to mention the most salient features. Second, the text has been masterfully structured and edited and reads well. Despite the fact that there are more than 50 contributors, the writing is fairly streamlined, consistent in its phraseology and as uniform as one could expect from a multiauthored book. Third, the value added to the bare facts that you can find in any other book is quite substantial and is the main reason for my enthusiasm. The data to be included, and or omitted, have been thoughtfully chosen. The book contains a lot of critically annotated, practice tested facts, presented in an authoritative manner. Thus, it can be used either as a textbook by the novice or a consultation source by the more experienced pathologist. Fourth, the book is up to date and masterfully integrates the recent advances with the classical knowledge. Even though the principal emphasis is on the diagnosis of GI diseases, more than adequate space is given to the relevant basic science and the pathogenetic data that are important for the interpretation of pathologic findings.

This book deserves the attention of the entire pathology and gastroenterology community at large. Without hesitation I would like to greet it as one of the most impressive new pathology books brought to my attention during this year. With my apologies to several Europeans included among the 50 plus contributors, to me it is an epitome of American pathology, American know-how, and American publishing at their best. An absolute must for your sign-out room and departmental library. And do not forget to mention it to the hospital librarian as well to the clinicians—it is the best that pathology can offer to keep them interested in what we have to add to the well-being of their patients.

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