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Book Review

Craighead JE: *Pathology and Pathogenesis of Human Viral Disease*, 600 pp, San Diego, Academic Press, 2000 (\$129.95)

The breadth of knowledge and the scope of practice in pathology have grown dramatically in the past decade. As a result of new advances in molecular biology in general and virology in particular, our understanding of basic mechanisms involved in virus-induced diseases is constantly growing. This has been paralleled by discoveries of new and emerging viral infections and the development of novel diagnostic techniques to identify viral agents. The overwhelmed pathologist constantly needs to learn new terminology, classifications, and technology to be able to communicate and survive in this rapidly changing world. These changes require quick access to a source of information to use as a starting point. In an age when many of us have personal computers and Internet on our desks and in our pockets, there is still a role for good reference book and journals. We can hold them and turn pages as we search for answers in reviewing difficult cases.

The book *Pathology and Pathogenesis of Human Viral Disease* in 32 chapters is written by a single author who is an experienced and well-published pathologist. The chapters are clearly written without redundancy with a large number of black-and-white and full-color photographs

throughout. References are extensive and as up-to-date as can be expected (1997–1998) in such a large text. I have few criticisms of this book, and most of them are pre-empted in the author's short preface. As Dr. Craighead indicates, "it is not an overview text of medical virological pathology," and it "is not traditional diagnostic virology." What is it then? According to the author, the organizational framework of the book "is an amalgam of classical virology interwoven with considerations of pathologic syndromes." As a result, the book lacks structural organization and detailed descriptions that are required for didactic studies or reference. I missed a few introductory chapters describing, at least briefly, advances in molecular pathology and virology as well as mechanisms of virus-induced cell injury, including apoptosis. The breadth and the limitations of present knowledge are only partially examined. The book provides a personal view of a field at the end of the era by a well-informed pathologist who attempted to accomplish an impossible task. Despite these limitations, this book is a reasonable resource for the practicing pathologist and virologist with interest in human diseases.

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