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Book Review

Reichart PA, Philipsen HP: Color Atlas of Dental Medicine, Oral Pathology, 304 pp, New York, Thieme-Stuttgart, 2000 ($199.00).

This 304 page atlas is illustrated with superb color clinical photographs of both intraoral and cutaneous lesions of the head and neck. The emphasis is on oral mucosal lesions, but there is good coverage of odontogenic tumors and cysts, salivary gland diseases, and non-neoplastic conditions such as fibrous dysplasia, cherubism, Paget's disease, and giant cell granuloma. Appropriate imaging is included.

For the surgical pathologist I perceive several problems with this atlas. First, many of the photomicrographs offer little diagnostic value because of the low magnification. When higher magnification is included, the accompanying discussion is often so limited as to be of minimal value in a differential diagnosis.

Additionally, the atlas was not designed for pathologists. The authors state in the forward that this atlas is for practicing dentists and is designed to assist them in diagnosing clinical lesions observed in their patients. For that reason, lesions are organized by location with the limited discussion fragmented to several anatomic areas. This arrangement is cumbersome, often forcing the reader to refer to the index or helpful diagnostic key section. Cross-references are included in some of the text, but they are not routinely present.

Another goal of this atlas is to provide enough information to accurately arrive at a correct diagnosis. In some cases this would be impossible for those not already having a thorough understanding of the disease. For instance, not enough information is provided to differentiate herpetiform aphthous from primary herpetic gingivostomatitis or erythema multiforme. Similar difficulties would be encountered in a differential diagnosis involving fibrous dysplasia, sclerosing osteomyelitis, and cemento-osseous dysplasia.

I would highly recommend this atlas to those who are interested in high-quality clinical photographs of oral and facial diseases, but I could not recommend it for histopathologic correlation or clinical differential diagnoses.

Bruce F Barker, D.D.S.
Professor, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
University of Missouri-Kansas City
School of Dentistry
Kansas, City, Missouri