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Book Review

Henson DE, Albores-Saavedra J: Pathology of Incipient Neoplasia, Third Edition, 856 pp, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001 ($165.00).

In the "era" of early cancer detection, a book to guide pathologists in the recognition of lesions that have been associated with early neoplastic development is welcome. Because the fundamental basis of knowledge in cancer pathology was obtained from invasive forms of cancer, the histologic interpretation of incipient neoplastic or preneoplastic lesions still remains controversial in some fields. This book covers in several chapters divided by different organs/systems, like a traditional book of tumor pathology, the histological criteria for diagnosis of several preneoplastic or early neoplastic lesions.

The chapters are written in a comprehensive way by several experts in the different fields of pathology. Most of them incorporate to the morphological descriptions the more relevant molecular alterations that can be recognized in the incipient neoplasias. This is an important approach because in past years pathologists have used information such as oncogene amplification, mutations in tumor suppressor genes, aneuploidy, among others, more frequently in cancer pathology for the diagnosis and definition of outcome. It could be debatable if topics covered in some chapters represent true "incipient" neoplasias and not advanced ones, but it reflects the natural difficultly in the present status of knowledge to define precisely how incipient or advanced a is lesion in some organs. There are black and white and color pictures, most of them illustrative and of good quality. However, some (rare, fortunately!) figures are out of focus and have green filters that compromise their quality. In future editions these figures should be changed. The references provide extensive coverage of all conditions related but could be more updated, specially in areas of fast-growing of knowledge. The index is complete and user-friendly.

In summary, this text is a forward step in the future of tumor pathology, when we are requested not to recognize advanced cancers but to diagnose and predict outcomes in early lesions based on a blending of the information derived from morphology and molecular biology.

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