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Book Review

Young B: Picture Tests in Histology, 248 pp, London, Churchill Livingstone, 2001 ($24.95).

Picture Tests in Histology is a collection of questions keyed to about 120 color photomicrographs and electron micrographs developed by Dr. Barbara Young. Dr. Young is an accomplished anatomic pathologist who has authored two other books: *Wheater's Functional Histology* and *Wheater's Histopathology*. This new picture test book is a companion to *Wheater's Functional Histology* (Young and Heath). The questions and accompanying photo and electron micrographs are organized into five tests with feedback provided at the end of each of those units. The focus is to provide a mechanism for the student to prepare for examinations or complete a quick review of basic histology.

In general, the quality of the tissue selected and the micrographs is good-to-excellent. There is a good balance between light and electron micrographs. The use of true and false questions allows students to go through the material quickly and identify deficits in their knowledge, but it is not a format used for USMLE Step I or on most medical school exams. The feedback for the questions is adequate but often too limited, containing only histology material. The author does not take advantage of the opportunity to integrate structure and function and to include important cell biological information in the explanations. The division into five tests rather than subject areas is also awkward.

The main question is what would be the market for such a text? I see little interest among medical students. Many schools have Websites or CDs with similar or better photomicrographs. Many of those Websites are interactive, with quizzes for students, including questions more of the type that they will encounter on national or course exams. Those Websites also are often streamlined to specific course content. A printed text is limited in that it cannot be modified to fit an individual course's content. In addition, the book competes with the Wheater atlas that is sold with a CD that students and faculty can use to review histology in an electronic form.

In summary, *Picture Tests in Histology* presents a high-quality series of micrographs that could be a useful text for students reviewing histology for exams or before studying the same regions or topics in pathology. However, the market for such books is very limited, especially when one considers the format of the questions.

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