

Surgical Pathology of the Head and Neck

Second edition, revised and expanded (in three volumes)

By Leon Barnes, editor

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No area of pathology is as complex as head and neck pathology. This anatomic region defined as anything between clavicle and skull base encompasses a lot of different tissue types and anatomic regions. Diseases occurring in the head and neck may be unique to this area but of course, this body part may also be involved by afflictions with a more generalised distribution. That means that a book on head and neck pathology has to cover almost the entire area of pathology, only omitting pathology of the gastro-intestinal and urogenital tract.

That means also that a book on head and neck pathology will be a large one. So it is not surprising that the book to be reviewed in this contribution consists of 3 separate volumes counting almost 2200 pages. Compared with the first edition of this work, the book has expanded from 2 to 3 volumes to accommodate for the increase in knowledge in the area of head and neck pathology as well as to give more room for new technologies in the field of pathology.

When the first edition of this book on head and neck pathology appeared, now 15 years ago, nothing comparable was available and for almost the entire 15 years, Barnes' book reigned unopposed. This new edition however has to compete with a lot of other recently published books on the same subject. It seems that head and neck pathology has attracted the attention of publishers and now, a pathologist feeling the need to have a textbook on head and neck pathology on hands can make a choice. Then, I am sure that buying Barnes is a worthwhile investment. All chapters are written by authors well known for their expertise in the field of head and neck pathology. In the first 4 chapters, attention is paid to more general aspects of pathology: the use of frozen-section diagnoses, fine needle aspiration of the head and neck, electron microscopy, and molecular pathology. Thereafter, chapters follow that are devoted to various anatomic subsites in the head and neck: larynx, hypopharynx, oesophagus, oral cavity and oropharynx, nasal cavity, paranasal sinuses and nasopharynx, ear, trachea, salivary glands, thyroid gland, parathyroid glands, skin and eye and ocular adnexae. Also, chapters are devoted to subjects of a more diffuse nature: nervous system, soft tissues, bones and joints, developmental lesions, and infectious diseases. In other chapters specific groups of diseases are discussed: midfacial destructive diseases, hematopoietic and lymphoid disorders, cysts and cyst-like lesions of the head and neck, and odontogenic tumours. An entire chapter is devoted to the pathology

of neck dissections and another to the occult primary and metastatic tumours to and from the head and neck. As patients with head and neck malignancies quite often are treated with irradiation, a chapter on radiation injury is also very appropriate. The final chapter contains anything that has not been handled at other sites and is labelled as miscellaneous disorders of the head and neck. The various subjects are easy to find as each volume contains a register encompassing the contents of all three volumes, a substantial improvement when compared with the first edition in which the index was restricted to the content of that particular volume. References are well chosen and not only exhaustive but also up-to-date.

The book is very well illustrated with black and white photographs of good quality as well as with clarifying drawings. Tables serve to highlight distinctive features of groups of entities. My only point of criticism concerns the illustrations; both photographs and drawing that show the normal tooth development and the histology of the teeth and supporting structures. They could have been of better quality. This is an area unfamiliar to most pathologists and some guidance on this subject is indispensable.

Having said this, Barnes' Surgical Pathology of the Head and Neck is a book that not only serves the pathologist faced with specimens from this area very well but that is also very useful for the clinician, either ENT surgeon or maxillofacial surgeon who has to treat these patients. Adequate knowledge on this subject by both clinician and pathologist will increase the quality of patient care. Barnes' will be helpful to achieve this.

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