

PREFACE

In medicine it is always necessary to start with the observation of the sick and to always return to this as this is the paramount means of verification. Observe methodically and vigorously without neglecting any exploratory procedure using all that can be provided by physical examination, chemical studies, bacteriological findings and experiment, one must compare the facts observed during life and the lesions revealed by autopsy.

Antoine Marfan, French paediatrician (1858–1942)

In the last two centuries, medical knowledge has advanced at an amazing rate as bioscientists and clinicians have observed and investigated their patients' conditions to understand better the fundamental mechanisms of disease. That in turn has led to new treatments and the need both to evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment and to identify any detrimental consequences. *Pathology in Clinical Practice* attempts to bring together, in a discussion of 50 scenarios, the basic mechanisms of disease and how they operate to produce the clinical signs and symptoms, a rational approach to investigation and how patient management is influenced by specific pathological phenomena.

This is a companion volume to *Basic Pathology – An introduction to the mechanisms of disease*, which approaches pathology from a clinical perspective, starting with a patient scenario and then working through the detail to cover the molecular and cellular responses to the various disease agents. *Pathology in Clinical Practice* helps students to assess their knowledge of basic pathology and their ability to apply it to their clinical work by using a question-and-answer format. The scenarios increase in complexity through the book, but they can be read in any order. They are broadly arranged into sections familiar to all clinicians as the way in which they approach the patient – first take the history, then elicit the signs, consider the differential diagnosis, assess the need for further investigations and decide on the

management. At each of these steps, an appreciation of the fundamental pathological concepts makes clinical medicine both easier to understand and more interesting.

The book uses diagrams to review the mechanisms, colour photographs to illustrate the changes occurring at tissue level and a large number of radiological images that visualize the processes in living patients. The quality, diversity and clinical usefulness of modern imaging allow radiographs to replace what previously might have been available only as a pickled specimen in a pathology museum. Pathology is very much a living subject when studied in this way.

In addition, students will want to learn enough histopathology to be able to interpret a surgical pathology, fine needle aspirate or autopsy report and to explain its significance to their patients. They will enjoy multidisciplinary meetings and clinicopathological conferences much more if the language and images are familiar to them. They will also need to know how to complete a death certificate and when to refer to the coroner. All of this is pathology in clinical practice and is covered in this book.

This book is primarily intended for undergraduate medical students, especially those used to a problem-based learning approach where the pathology is integrated with other subjects. It is written to be accessible to a wide range of students in health and bioscience disciplines and is intended to make revision a stimulating activity that helps join things together in a useful way. The style of some of the scenarios has been varied to provoke reflection on the complexity of clinical practice, including the intricacies of the doctor–patient and student–teacher relationships. Most of all, we hope that this book will encourage students to see pathology as both fun and fundamental.

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