

Book review

Dahlin's bone tumors

K Krishnan Unni, 480 pages, Lippincott-Raven Publishers, Philadelphia, 1996
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This hard-cover text comprising 480 pages is the fifth edition of Dahlin's classic monograph on bone tumors. The 28 chapters exemplify the depth and breadth of experience which underscores the importance of this book for pathologists and orthopedists alike. It has been carefully expanded by Dr. Unni, who has reviewed and added a further 2,545 cases to the enormous wealth of information presented in the previous editions.

Dr. Unni has adopted an approach which reflects a reliance on light microscopy of hematoxylin and eosin-stained specimens for the diagnosis. To support this, special attention has been taken to provide accurate photomicrographs to highlight the points made in the text and many of the original figures have been replaced. A minor criticism would be the choice of black-and-white figures over color, which seems to detract from the effort made to describe subtle differences between tumors.

The importance of collating clinical, radiologic and pathologic data in the diagnosis of bone tumors is emphasized by the orderly structure of each chapter which presents a balanced mix of relevant clinical information, typical imaging studies and the characteristic histologic appearances of the different entities. The value of this text is further enhanced by the contributions of Drs. Beabout and McLeod whose experience with plain radiography, computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging is unrivalled and their choices of representative figures do justice to this book.

This is not a book on treatment of bone tumors, and Dr. Unni has steered away from the in-depth discussions of management except regarding the enunciation

of guiding principles which reflect the philosophy of the Orthopedic Oncology group at the Mayo Clinic.

The entities addressed by this book are well dealt with and many examples of typical cases and their variants are given. Special note should be made of the chondromatous lesions described in the early chapters of the book, where an effort had been made, by attention to detail, to characterize the different tumors many of which may appear indistinguishable. The interplay between pathologic, clinical and radiologic data is again highlighted in these chapters when arriving at the grade of chondrosarcoma or the designation of chondral lesions as benign or malignant, two aspects which continue to confound orthopedic oncologists.

The expansion of sections regarding prognosis should be well received. It reflects the importance of other non-histologic parameters (e.g., flow cytometry) as measures of tumor behavior. With the large database available at the Mayo Clinic, it would be worthwhile in future to identify other potential prognostic factors which may be discernible at the cellular or subcellular levels.

This reference text embodies the long experience of a major oncologic institution and would be a valuable addition to the libraries of hospitals and departments. Its contents should be relevant to residents, oncologic specialists and "experts" in the field of orthopedic oncology well into the next century.

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