Sentinel lymph node evaluation has recently had a significant impact on the staging of patients with certain solid tumours. This atlas is one of several recent publications that provides readers with the rationale and results of sentinel node biopsy specifically for melanoma, breast cancer and colon cancer.

A distinct advantage of this particular book over other similar publications is that it is particularly tailored to the technical and practical aspects of lymphoscintigraphy and sentinel node biopsy. Published in 2002, the atlas has an extensive reference list for each of the six chapters for articles published up to the year 2001. The initial chapters concentrate on the rationale and development of sentinel lymph node biopsy and lymphoscintigraphy.

The section explaining the technical aspect of gamma probes is easy to understand and a short section on radiation exposure and safety is particularly useful. At the end of each chapter, a set of clinical “pearls” in dot-point format provide valuable practical tips on performing sentinel node biopsy, particularly for surgeons. The section on pathology handling of sentinel nodes highlights the current controversies regarding micrometastases, sectioning techniques and intraoperative assessment. Much of the atlas is dedicated to sentinel node biopsy in breast cancer and melanoma.

The final chapter relating to colorectal cancer is essentially a single institutional study suggesting that sentinel node biopsy is feasible and accurate for this condition. Overall, the book was quick, and easy, to read. Although the discussions regarding isotope use principally relate to Technetium 99 sulphur colloid (American publication), there is some discussion regarding the use of other colloidal agents including Antimony (the principal colloidal agent used in Australia and New Zealand).

The price for a concise atlas such as this seems high, but I believe that it would serve as a useful reference book for any person with an interest in sentinel node biopsy.

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