This is a large book that provides a comprehensive coverage of bone and soft tissue tumors. It represents the author’s (considerable) experience in one orthopaedic department. This is also the failing of the textbook. There is a heavy emphasis on straight surgical management, and while this is the cornerstone of soft tissue and bone tumor treatment, artful integration of radiotherapy, chemotherapy and rehabilitation must be discussed in a specialised textbook.

This textbook does not take the reader far beyond the basics of tumor excision; non-surgical managements are shamefully dismissed. The chapters have a distinct “home spun” feel exacerbated by a lack of direct referencing in the text. Chapters are annexed with references listed in order of year of publication; the origin of information encoded in the body of the text remains the secret of the author. This is a major flaw of the publication which severely limits both the reader’s confidence in the text and its utility as a threshold to further investigation.

The early chapters give a broad outline of terminology, classification systems, surgical managements, etc. There are some useful portions, eg the table of bone tumour types and their tissue origin (pages 14-16). These outlining chapters, however, show glaring problems which include the absence of the UICC TMN system of classification as well as a variety of problems in definition of terminology. One example is the definition of low versus high grade tumours on the basis of their rate of growth and whether there is a well-defined tumour limit. This definition is disappointingly imprecise and the failure to at least mention the word ‘mitosis’ is sad.

Sadness moves to pathos when the text discusses local recurrence (page 54). “In malignant tumors, even few residual cells are capable of producing local recurrence and metastases” – true of course, as is the statement which follows: “A calculated risk of local recurrence can be taken 1 when there is practically no danger of metastases, and 2 when the local recurrence can still be adequately and conservatively treated”. These statements need discussion including supportive references and a dissertation on adjuvant treatment – none is forthcoming.

The management of many of the tumour sub-types discussed in the book is in evolution and there is no allusion to the direction of such changes in management. There is no mention of the International Rhabdomyosarcoma studies or the Intergroup Ewing’s sarcoma studies; just seeing the word adriamycin or anthracycline anywhere in the book would have consoled.

The positive aspects are good black and white photos and a fairly comprehensive subject coverage. Some noted topic omissions include ameloblastomas, penile fibromatoses (Peyronies) and Keloids. A specialist in this field would expect more from a dedicated textbook as such do exist.

Lying flat, the book is 6cm tall and I could recommend the book for a short assistant surgeon as a aid to certain ergonomic aspects of musculoskeletal surgery.

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