Essentials in Cytopathology Series
1. D.P. Clark and W.C. Faquin: Thyroid Cytopathology. 2005
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Thyroid Cytopathology

With 116 Illustrations, 104 in Full Color

Foreword by Edmund S. Cibas, MD

Springer
Foreword

The evaluation of thyroid nodules by fine needle aspiration (FNA) is arguably the most challenging task in all of cytopathology. A cytologist must understand the clinical presentation of thyroid diseases, their defining histopathologic and cytopathologic features, and the intricacies of patient management. Drs. Clark and Faquin have provided a valuable framework for cytologists learning (and continuing to learn) this exacting discipline. Organized around a simple algorithm, the authors have provided a rational and concise approach towards acquiring skills in the cytologic diagnosis of thyroid nodules. This book, therefore, is a very welcome addition to the cytology literature.

Why are we examining such challenging specimens? Clearly, the clinical need is there. Thyroid nodules are exceedingly common: more than 50% of adults have one or more nodules. Surgical excision of all nodules is neither practical nor desirable. Enter FNA, without question the best currently available screening test for thyroid cancer. Because of it, thousands of patients with a benign diagnosis are spared unnecessary surgery every year, and those with cancer are reliably triaged for appropriate therapy.

The rising number of FNAs performed in the United States is a tribute to its success as a screening test. In many institutions, a thyroid FNA is the most common FNA specimen. For a relatively new diagnostic test, this is a remarkable state of affairs. Twenty-five years ago, few thyroid cancers were diag-
nosed by FNA in the United States, and in the 1980s, some prominent pathologists still questioned the value of FNA for thyroid nodules. There is no more debate. FNA has proven its value. In 2004, an estimated 25,200 thyroid cancers will be diagnosed in the United States. It is fair to say that virtually all of them will be diagnosed by FNA. If there are nine benign diagnoses for every one cancer, then approximately 250,000 thyroid FNAs will have been performed in the United States in 2004.

Cytologists must be armed and ready to evaluate these clinically vital specimens. This book, with its clear algorithm, cogent text, and beautiful illustrations, provides the ammunition a cytologist needs to successfully master thyroid FNAs.

Edmund S. Cibas, MD
The subspecialty of cytopathology is 60 years old and has become established as a solid and reliable discipline in medicine. As expected, cytopathology literature has expanded in a remarkably short period of time, from a few textbooks prior to the 1980s to a current library of texts and journals devoted exclusively to cytomorphology that is substantial. Essentials in Cytopathology does not presume to replace any of the distinguished textbooks in cytopathology. Instead, the series will publish generously illustrated and user-friendly guides for both pathologists and clinicians.

Building on the amazing success of The Bethesda System for Reporting Cervical Cytology, now in its second edition, the Series will utilize a similar format, including minimal text, tabular criteria, and superb illustrations based on real-life specimens. Essentials in Cytopathology will, at times, deviate from the classic organization of pathology texts. The logic of decision trees, elimination of unlikely choices, and narrowing of differential diagnosis through a pragmatic approach based on morphologic criteria will be some of the strategies used to illustrate principles and practice in cytopathology.

Most of the authors for Essentials in Cytopathology are faculty members at the Department of Pathology, Division of Cytopathology, The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions. They bring to each volume the legacy of John K. Frost and the collective experience of a preeminent cytopathology service. The archives at Hopkins are meticulously catalogued and form
the framework for text and illustrations. Authors from other institutions have been selected on the basis of their national reputations, experience, and enthusiasm for cytopathology. They bring to the series complementary viewpoints and enlarge the scope of materials contained in the photographs.

The editor and authors are indebted to our students, past and future, who challenge and motivate us to become the best that we possibly can be. We share that experience with you through these pages and hope that you will learn from them as we have from those who have come before us. We would be remiss if we did not pay tribute to our professional colleagues, the cytotechnologists and preparatory technicians who lovingly care for the specimens that our clinical colleagues send to us.

And finally, we cannot emphasize enough throughout these volumes the importance of collaboration with the patient care team. Every specimen comes to us as a question begging an answer. Without input from the clinicians, complete patient histories, results of imaging studies, and other ancillary tests, we cannot perform optimally. It is our responsibility to educate our clinicians about their role in our interpretation, and for us to integrate as much information as we can gather into our final diagnosis, even if the answer at first seems obvious.

We hope you will find this series useful and welcome your feedback as you place these handbooks by your microscopes, and into your bookbags.

*Dorothy L. Rosenthal, MD, FIAC*
Baltimore, Maryland
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