

Preface

Molecular morphologic methods—defined as molecular and cell biologic analyses of tissues in which the architectural integrity and spatial interrelationship of the cells being studied are preserved—have increased rapidly in number and versatility during the past few years. These changes have occurred both in diagnostic pathology and in basic scientific research. Several ongoing developments affecting the pathology and the scientific communities should make this book a valuable resource. First, it is usually difficult for pathologists and investigators interested in molecular morphology to learn rapidly from a single source about methods suitable to specific diagnostic and experimental questions. Second, the completion of the human genome project in the near future will provide the foundation to learn about the functions of myriad of genes with unique roles in specific cells and tissues, so a morphologic basis for the study of human genes and understanding human diseases will be in greater demand. There is no good single source available that discusses in detail the most significant aspects of recent cell biologic techniques by outstanding experts in their fields. Such a book is needed to keep up with scientific research in morphology and recent pathologic diagnostic techniques relevant in the twenty-first century.

Our objective was to produce a book addressing the major areas relevant to molecular morphology today. Many of the chapters include detailed protocols for setting up or performing techniques now in use. Potential pitfalls and anticipated problems are also discussed. Practicing pathologists interested in recent developments and researchers interested in molecular morphology for designing experiments, for teaching undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, or simply for keeping up with the literature detailing molecular morphologic approaches—all will find here the technical and scientific background to accomplish their objectives.

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