
Preface

This atlas is the product of combined clinical and laboratory experience of more than half a century. It represents a highly rewarding collaboration between cutaneous oncologists trained in Mohs microscopically controlled surgery and a dermatopathologist. In an age when technology such as whole exome sequencing of tumor DNA, optical coherence tomography of in vivo skin, and even spectrophotometric diagnosis of skin lesions is rapidly changing the way we understand skin malignancies and diagnose and treat them, it is remarkable that in a fundamental way we still rely on a method of microscopic diagnosis that is centuries old: the light microscope. The endurance of this “original technology” is less an indication of the absence of other cost-efficient diagnostic tools and more a reflection on the general reliability of conventional histopathology in making the majority of initial and often final diagnostic decisions about a cutaneous cancer.

Fundamental to the art and science of microscopic identification of cancer is the recognition of the wide range of variants for a particular entity and the need to view tissue in a flexible fashion. That is, one must master the fundamentals and understand what the images under the light microscope reflect biologically. Then, one must use that broader understanding of the images to make a clinically relevant and useful diagnosis. In essence, this atlas is intended not only to convey the fundamental features of each entity under discussion but also to highlight pathways to understand how those features may relate to others in a differential fashion so that a clinical decision can be made in real time. For this reason we have titled the book *Atlas of Practical Mohs Histopathology*. We hope you find this book a useful adjunct as you care for your patients with skin cancer.

Any errors or omissions in this text are ours alone. We would appreciate feedback and suggestions so that we may continue to improve both the quality and content of this first edition.

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