
Preface

It has become widely recognized over the past two decades that many patients with parasitic infections of the lung do not receive an accurate diagnosis in a timely fashion; this applies especially to immunosuppressed patients. Although some parasitic diseases of the lung are uncommon and seen in endemic areas, the clinician should keep in mind that with immigration and widespread travel, even uncommon parasitic diseases can be seen in any latitude. There are few books dealing directly with parasitic diseases of the respiratory system. This book represents an attempt to summarize the natural history, pathogenesis, molecular mechanisms, and diagnostic features of parasitic diseases involving the lungs. It is quite evident that the present accretion of knowledge makes it impossible to compress all available information in a small volume. The question is what to include and what to delete. We tried to offer our readers a practical approach to the diagnosis of parasitic diseases involving the lungs and at the same time to provide a general background of the current molecular biology and immunological mechanisms that cause tissue injury. We hope that the present volume can serve as a reference tool to the clinician, radiologist, and the practicing pathologist. The first chapters will help the clinician to review general concepts of pulmonary parasitic diseases. Chapters on molecular biology and immunology will provide a good review of the current literature on these topics. Finally, the practicing pathologist will find concise information on the morphology of the most common pathogenic organisms and of structures that resemble organisms but are in fact artifacts during tissue processing and sectioning or the result of endogenous or exogenous particles. This is the purpose of the chapter entitled “Pseudoparasitic Structures” that we hope will be of help to the pathologist to avoid common diagnostic errors.

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