Book Review

Dermatopathology Interactive Atlas (CD-ROM)

A review by Noah S. Scheinfeld, MD, JD

There are certain inherent advantages that CD-ROMs have over books for visual fields such as dermatology and dermatopathology. CDs are compact, allow for the use of hyperlinks between related topics, and have the capacity to hold more images than books. The ideal dermatopathology CD-ROM would run on a computer with a high-speed Internet connection and provide direct hyperlinks from references to MEDLINE abstracts or full-text articles. The ideal CD atlas also would allow zooming and panning on all images to replicate using a microscope at different magnification settings. In addition, it would provide a wealth of clinical images to facilitate clinical/pathological correlation. Finally, the atlas would be tied to relational databases so that pieces of data could be tied together to enhance patient care.

The Dermatopathology Interactive Atlas on CD-ROM is a valuable addition to the growing field of dermatopathology media. The atlas contains more than 5000 color images (both clinical and photomicrographs), 44 chapters, 10,000 links, and covers approximately 1000 topics. It is written in HTML format, which allows the user to jump from one area of text or images to another without having to turn a page. The images are high quality, and many images show varying degrees of magnification. Finally, the text is instructive, and the references are apposite. Images can be copied from the CD-ROM and inserted into PowerPoint presentations easily. Future editions might incorporate the use of references with hyperlinks, the ability to zoom and pan on all images, and even more clinical images. This CD-ROM is a worthy work in dermatopathology and part of a welcome trend toward using technology to enhance dermatologic education.

System Requirements
PC: Windows 95/98/ME/2000, IE 4.0 or later (5.0 recommended), 800×600 resolution recommended. Macintosh: Macintosh 7300 or better, system 7.5.3 or higher, minimum 16MB available RAM, 4× CD-ROM or faster.