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Book Review

Perspectives in pediatric pathology, Manuel Nistal, Miguel Reyes-Mugica (Eds.), Development and pathology of the pediatric testis, vol. 30. Society for Pediatric Pathology (2017). p. 382 $225

My introduction to pediatric urology was counting germ cells in testis biopsies with Dale Huff in Philadelphia, so I am indebted to a pathologist for teaching me about undescended testis. This new textbook collects 25 articles published between 2015 and 2016 on the pediatric testis. Manuel Nistal from Madrid, and Miguel Reyes-Mugica from Pittsburgh, and two colleagues have written all the chapters, which gives this book a consistent voice and avoids repetition between chapters. They provide a complete discussion of the normal development of the prepubertal testis, disorders of sexual differentiation (DSD), undescended testis, varicocele, and tumors.

The key chapters for urologists are: Chapter 3, which shows the development of gonocytes to Ad spermatogonia (stem cells) to mature sperm during the three phases of spermatogenesis, Chapters 5–7 which cover DSD, Chapter 14 on cryptorchidism which discusses a way to stratify prepubertal testis biopsies with eventual fertility, and Chapter 25 on prepubertal testis tumors. Other chapters provide comprehensive discussion of rarer conditions, such as hamartomas, epididymal stones, the link between macro-orchidism to Fragile X and hypothyroidism, and fibrous pseudotumors.

I have two observations of note: first, in Chapter 14, it states that the undescended testis is at six times the risk of testicular cancer compared with the general population. This statement is based on old series, which did not differentiate by location of the testis or age at surgery. Second, the Index does not contain all the sub-topics in the book, so browsing the Contents may be a more efficient way to find a specific subject. These issues do not detract from the overall impact of the book; this is the first time that such a breadth of topics on the pediatric testis has been gathered in a single volume.

This book would be very useful for pediatric urology and pediatric surgery training programs. Not only does it contain beautiful images of pathological specimens, the editors review the embryology, physiology, and clinical presentation of testicular conditions, so a trainee can gain a better understanding of how and when surgical interventions are useful. For those in practice, this book is a good way to brush up on rarer conditions, so you can sound smart before you ask your colleague in pediatric pathology about a puzzling case.

The book is only available via the Society of Pediatric Pathology website: https://www.spponline.org.

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