



# Book Review

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**Prados M. *Brain Cancer. American Cancer Society Atlas of Clinical Oncology.* Hamilton, Ontario: B.C. Decker, Inc; 2001. 434 pages. Casebound, \$199 US, \$299 CDN.**

This is a well-written, well-edited 434-page textbook, which is part of the American Cancer Society's *Atlas of Oncology* series of at least 24 books published or in print on various tumors of the human body. The editor, Michael Prados, is a well-known neuro-oncologist who has gathered a group of experts on brain tumors from the clinical and basic science disciplines, mostly from the University of California San Francisco but also from M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, National Cancer Institute, and other major centers.

The book is easy to read and contains multiple macroscopic and microscopic color illustrations of brain tumors. The clear tables and figures, the reader-friendly printing font, and the high-quality paper make this textbook eminently readable.

The book covers topics in a comprehensive manner, describing the key features and controversies regarding the diagnosis and treatment of brain tumors. Although the book attempts to cover all brain tumor types, the emphasis lies on primary brain tumors and in particular malignant gliomas. The book begins with discussion of epidemiology and histopathology and progresses to genetics, imaging, and treatment options. Specific tumor types are considered at the end. The chapters that describe newer treatment options, such as radiosurgery and gene therapy approaches, are well-written and detailed. The chapter on familial brain tumor syndromes is a classic. Genetic abnormalities underlying the pathogenesis of brain tumors are discussed thoroughly, especially with regard to p53, Rb, p16, EGFR, VEGF, and PTEN alterations. Newer concepts, such as chemosensitivity of oligodendrogliomas and distinct molecular pathways leading to the formation of glioblastomas, are properly addressed. The chapters on chemotherapy, surgery, and management of adult and pediatric brain tumors are thorough, informative, and concise. In particular, newer surgical techniques (image-guidance, functional imaging and mapping) as well as experimental chemotherapeutic trials are discussed.

The book includes a chapter on spinal tumors (in conflict with the title of the book) and a chapter on meningiomas (not necessarily malignant tumors), and there is some unevenness among the chapters and the authors who discuss individual tumor types. The chapter on positron emission tomography imaging could have been incorporated in the magnetic resonance imaging chapter. Psychosocial issues and management of problems such as seizures or deep vein thromboses that commonly occur in patients with brain tumors were covered only superficially.

In summary, this book accomplishes the task of providing concise, nicely illustrated information to the reader. It is best suited for the clinician (medical or radiation oncologist, neurosurgeon, or neuro-oncologist). It is detailed, thorough, and well referenced. It compares favorably with other recent textbooks on brain tumors (*Brain Tumors* by Kaye and Laws, *Cancer of the Nervous System* by Black and Loeffler, and *The Gliomas* by Berger and Wilson) and has the advantage of being smaller and easier to read than other books on this subject.

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