

A Case-Based Guide to Neuromuscular Pathology

Lan Zhou
Dennis K. Burns
Chunyu Cai
Editors

 Springer

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To my family members, husband Ming, and daughters Grace and Rebecca, for their love, encouragement, and support.

Lan Zhou, MD, PhD

To my wife Carol, my daughter Kelly, and my son Evan, for their enduring love and support.

Dennis K. Burns, MD

To Jade.

Chunyu Cai, MD, PhD

Preface

We present this book, *A Case-Based Guide to Neuromuscular Pathology*, to neurologists, pathologists, and other practitioners who take care of patients with neuromuscular diseases.

Biopsy of skeletal muscle and peripheral nerve with histopathological interpretation is frequently requested by neurologists to evaluate patients with myopathies and neuropathies as a part of the clinical workup and management. Muscle biopsy plays an important role in the diagnosis and classification of inflammatory myopathies, metabolic myopathies, congenital myopathies, muscular dystrophies, and toxic myopathies. Nerve biopsy is essential for diagnosing vasculitic neuropathy, amyloid neuropathy, infectious neuropathies, and neuropathies caused by malignant cellular infiltration of nerves. Although muscle and nerve biopsies are less frequently performed in the era of molecular testing, biopsies are still useful in many cases, as the sensitivity of many genetic tests in identifying pathological mutations in hereditary myopathies and neuropathies is not high. Moreover, biopsies can be extremely valuable in the initial characterization of some myopathies and neuropathies and can be used to direct subsequent genetic testing for specific hereditary myopathies and neuropathies. In addition, skin biopsy for the evaluation of intraepidermal nerve fiber density has emerged as the gold standard for diagnosing small fiber neuropathy and has been increasingly utilized by neuromuscular specialists.

This book covers the entire spectrum of neuromuscular pathology including skeletal muscle, peripheral nerve, and skin biopsies with biopsy interpretation. It comprises three parts. Part 1 uses three introductory chapters to review muscle, nerve, and skin biopsy indications and procedures, biopsy specimen handling and processing, utility of individual stains, normal muscle and nerve histology, and common muscle and nerve pathology. The 28 myopathy case chapters in Part 2 and 11 neuropathy case chapters in Part 3, collected from our practice over many years, illustrate the clinical and pathological features of these entities, demonstrate the indications and utilities of biopsies, discuss clinical and pathological differential diagnosis, update the individual disease management, and summarize pertinent clinical and pathology pearls for each case.

This book is intended to help neurologists understand the utility of muscle, nerve, and skin biopsies, correctly order these biopsies, become more familiar with neuromuscular pathology, perform clinical and pathological correlations, and make sound clinical decisions for management of patients with neuromuscular diseases based on biopsy findings. The book will help neurology residents and neuromuscular fellows answer questions related to the muscle and nerve pathology in their in-service and board exams. It is our hope that this book will also benefit neuromuscular pathologists and trainees as they correlate morphological alterations in muscle and nerve biopsies with clinical presentations and communicate their findings to clinical colleagues caring for patients with neuromuscular disorders.

We are enormously grateful to the authors of this book, who are experienced neuromuscular specialists and neuropathologists with sophisticated knowledge and expertise in neuromuscular medicine and pathology. We thank Springer for publishing this book, and thank Michael Wilt and other members in Springer for their excellent editorial support.

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Contents

Part I Introduction to Neuromuscular Pathology Evaluation

1	Skeletal Muscle Biopsy Evaluation	3
	Dennis K. Burns	
2	Peripheral Nerve Biopsy Evaluation	49
	Chunyu Cai	
3	Skin Biopsy with Cutaneous Nerve Fiber Evaluation	75
	Lan Zhou	

Part II Myopathy Cases

4	A 20-Year-Old Man with Acute Multi-organ Failure and Rhabdomyolysis	91
	Lan Zhou and Susan C. Shin	
5	A 45-Year-Old Woman with Proximal Limb Weakness and Skin Peeling on Fingertips	97
	Lan Zhou, Susan C. Shin, and Chunyu Cai	
6	A 75-Year-Old Man with Slowly Progressive Leg and Hand Weakness	109
	Lan Zhou and Chunyu Cai	
7	A 53-Year-Old Woman with Proximal Limb Weakness and Marked CK Elevation	121
	Lan Zhou and Chunyu Cai	
8	A 61-Year-Old Woman with Progressive Distal Limb and Deltoid Muscle Weakness	131
	Lan Zhou	
9	A 63-Year-Old Woman with Debilitating Muscle Pain	137
	Lan Zhou	

10	A 33-Year-Old Woman with Pain and Swelling in the Right Calf and Persistent Fever	145
	Lan Zhou, Laura K. Stein, and Susan C. Shin	
11	A 28-Year-Old Woman with Proximal Limb Weakness and Scapular Winging	151
	Rahul Abhyankar, Chunyu Cai, and Jaya R. Trivedi	
12	A 52-Year-Old Man with Proximal Limb Weakness and Hand Stiffness	159
	Lan Zhou and Susan C. Shin	
13	A 51-Year-Old Woman with Long-Standing Exercise Intolerance	167
	Lan Zhou	
14	A 37-Year-Old Woman with Leg Weakness and CK Elevation	175
	Elisabeth Golden and Lan Zhou	
15	A 25-Year-Old Woman with Droopy Eyelids and Double Vision	185
	Lan Zhou and Chunyu Cai	
16	A 58-Year-Old Man with Hypercapnic Respiratory Failure	195
	Lan Zhou, Patrick Kwon, and Susan C. Shin	
17	A 65-Year-Old Man with Asymmetrical Leg Weakness and Foot Tingling	203
	Lan Zhou and Chunyu Cai	
18	A 40-Year-Old Man with Muscle Pain and Fatigue	213
	Lan Zhou	
19	A 42-Year-Old Woman with Progressive Limb Weakness and Breathing Difficulty	221
	Lan Zhou and Dennis K. Burns	
20	A 49-Year-Old Man with Limb Weakness and Painful Skin Lesions	229
	Kara Stavros, Rajeev Motiwala, Lan Zhou, and Susan C. Shin	
21	A 54-Year-Old Man with Progressive Lower Limb Weakness and CK Elevation	233
	Lan Zhou	
22	A 63-Year-Old Man with Progressive Limb Weakness and Slurred Speech	243
	Lan Zhou and Susan C. Shin	
23	A 6-Year-Old Girl with Muscle Pain and Swelling in the Thighs	251
	Diana P. Castro, Chunyu Cai, and Dustin Jacob Paul	

24	A 4-Year-Old Boy with Progressive Weakness, Difficulty Walking and Running, and Increased Falls	257
	Diana P. Castro, Chunyu Cai, and Dustin Jacob Paul	
25	A 2-Year-Old Girl with Hypotonia Since Birth and Delayed Motor and Speech Development	263
	Diana P. Castro, Chunyu Cai, and Dustin Jacob Paul	
26	An 8-year-old boy with delayed motor milestones and proximal leg muscle weakness	269
	Partha S. Ghosh and Hart G. W. Lidov	
27	A 6-Year-Old-Boy with Proximal Leg Muscle Weakness and Facial Weakness	275
	Partha S. Ghosh and Hart G. W. Lidov	
28	A 6-Week-Old Boy with Neonatal Hypotonia and Feeding and Respiratory Difficulties	283
	Partha S. Ghosh and Hart G. W. Lidov	
29	A 6-Year-Old Boy with Respiratory and Feeding Difficulties at Birth, Delayed Gross Motor Milestones, and Facial and Proximal Lower Limb Weakness	289
	Partha S. Ghosh and Chunyu Cai	
30	A 12-Year-Old Girl with a 2-Year History of Progressive Limb Weakness and Difficulties with Exercise	297
	Diana P. Castro, Chunyu Cai, and Dustin Jacob Paul	
31	A 3-Month-Old Boy with Generalized Hypotonia, Weakness, Pneumonia and Respiratory Failure	303
	Diana P. Castro, Chunyu Cai, and Dustin Jacob Paul	
Part III Neuropathy Cases		
32	A 59-Year-Old Woman with Subacute Lower Limb Weakness and Painful Paresthesia	311
	Shaida Khan and Chunyu Cai	
33	A 63-Year-Old Man with Nausea, Vomiting, Orthostatic Dizziness, and Distal Limb Paresthesia	319
	Jeffrey L. Elliott, Lan Zhou, Chunyu Cai, and Michelle Kaku	
34	A 47-year-old woman with progressive numbness and weakness in the limbs	329
	Lingchao Meng, Yun Yuan, and Shan Chen	
35	A 65-Year-Old Woman with Acute Limb Weakness and Worsening of Paresthesia	335
	Susan C. Shin, Michelle Kaku, and Lan Zhou	

36 A 34-Year-Old Man with Right Hand and Left Foot Numbness 343
Sharon P. Nations and Dennis K. Burns

**37 A 64-Year-Old Woman with Progressive Pain, Numbness
and Weakness in the Right Lower Limb.** 349
Lan Zhou, Susan Morgello, Rajeev Motiwala, and Susan C. Shin

**38 A 68-Year-Old Man with Progressive Lower Limb Numbness
and Weakness and Urinary Incontinence** 357
Lan Zhou, Susan Morgello, and Susan C. Shin

**39 A 53-Year-Old Woman with Pain, Burning, Tingling,
and Numbness in the Distal Limbs** 365
Lan Zhou

40 A 40-Year-Old Woman with Patchy Painful Paresthesia 375
Lan Zhou

**41 A 39-Year-Old Woman with Intermittent Bilateral Foot
and Leg Pain since Childhood** 381
Ryan Castoro, Jun Li, and Lan Zhou

**42 A 35-Year-Old Man with Pain and Numbness in the
Left Lateral Thigh.** 389
Lan Zhou

Index of Cases 395

Index. 397

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Rahul Abhyankar, MD Department of Neurology & Neurotherapeutics, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX, USA

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Part I
Introduction to Neuromuscular
Pathology Evaluation

Chapter 1

Skeletal Muscle Biopsy Evaluation



Dennis K. Burns

Introduction

First introduced into clinical practice in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, muscle biopsies have played an integral role in the diagnosis and treatment of patients with neuromuscular diseases for well over a century. The interpretation of morphological changes in skeletal muscles, supplemented by enzyme histochemical and immunohistochemical stains are now regularly integrated with molecular analyses to provide physicians with an unprecedented understanding of the pathogenesis and phenotypic complexities of neuromuscular diseases. Although advances in molecular diagnoses have eliminated the need for muscle biopsies in some disorders, in many conditions, biopsies continue to provide information not readily obtainable by other methods.

Muscle Biopsy Acquisition

There are three important aspects of muscle biopsy acquisition: selecting the proper muscle, obtaining an adequate amount of tissue, and minimizing artifacts.

The importance of selecting the right muscle for biopsy cannot be overemphasized. Skeletal muscles are not equally affected by a given disease process. While the majority of myopathies predominantly affect proximal limb muscles, a few preferentially involve distal limb, trunk, or facial muscles. In order to maximize the diagnostic yield of a muscle biopsy, it is important to carefully select the biopsy site. Selection of the biopsy site can be challenging and should be done in close consultation with the

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