

Pathology of the Placenta

A Practical Guide

T. Yee Khong
Eoghan E. Mooney
Peter G. J. Nikkels
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Preface

The placenta is one of the most misunderstood and neglected tissues in anatomical pathology. It is a transient organ lasting only for the duration of a pregnancy and yet is of immense value to clinicians in understanding the success or otherwise of the pregnancy. It is also a unique organ in that it is a composite of two genomic contributions and cells derived from the placenta invade maternal tissue during pregnancy; thus, it is of interest to basic scientists studying immunology and cancer biology.

This book describes the pathology of the human singleton third trimester placenta and builds on the initial effort of a group of pathologists, clinicians and scientists who met in Amsterdam in 2014. It aims to provide agreed nomenclature/nosology and definitions of lesions for pathologists; to define thresholds, where possible, for lesions to enable meaningful clinical correlations; to indicate how strong the evidence is for stated clinical correlations, and, hence, provide management guidance for clinicians; and to acknowledge areas of uncertainty to direct future research.

Internationally recognised experts contributed to this book, the contents and text of which were discussed and workshopped at a three-day meeting – the Dublin Consensus Meeting – to result in this collective text. Accordingly, we hope that this book is accurate and lacks bias and that it represents our best understanding of the pathology of the human placenta at this time.

The book is aimed at the practising pathologist in general and community hospitals as well as in teaching hospitals. It will also provide a source of reference for obstetricians, neonatologists, epidemiologists and researchers. Medico-legal practitioners may find the book useful.

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Part I

Background