

Review: Skin Cancer, Melanoma and Mimics. Practical Diagnosis and Non-Surgical Treatments. The Definitive Reference Text by Mileham Hayes

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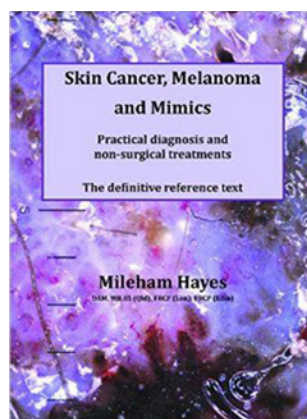
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Review by Christian Lefebvre

I am a dermatologist in private practice and have worked in a university hospital environment for many years. I am glad of having been given the opportunity to review Dr. Hayes' book on clinical diagnosis and treatment of skin cancers.

The title of the book is inviting, as it suggests that its aim is to serve practicing dermatologists, generalists and all interested students of dermatology. Moreover, the fact that its author is Australian induced special expectations for me. Since this country is known to be one of the most affected by the purported epidemics of melanoma, its practitioners, I thought, should have acquired a particular expertise worth being communicated.

The ambition of the author is to cover cutaneous neoplasms from both the (clinical) diagnostic and therapeutic point of view. In reading the text, one rapidly understands that Dr. Hayes is addressing physicians with various backgrounds. The "army" fighting skin cancers in Australia seems to count in its ranks many general practitioners having acquired the necessary expertise. This could be an inspiration for practitioners in other countries where dermatology is mastered rather exclusively by dermatologists, a practice that soon will become overwhelmed. The measures taken in Australia seem to be efficient in controlling these epidemics. Apart from the treatment techniques well presented in the book, I would have appreciated a short discussion of the public health policies existing in Australia.



Hayes M. *Skin Cancer, Melanoma and Mimics. Practical Diagnosis and Non-surgical Treatments. The Definitive Reference Text.* Morningside, QLD, Australia: Skin Cancer Books, 2013. 482 pages. ISBN: 978-0987234353

The format of the book is adequate. The concise and synthetic mind governing its redaction makes rapid consultation on a specific topic is easy reading. The size of the book (482 pages) is very reasonable considering the extent of the subject. The practical aspect of each chapter is never neglected.

The book gives preference to frequently occurring lesions and teaches efficient ways of recognizing them. For example, the illustrations pertaining to actinic keratosis are better than those found in most textbooks. Many clinical photographs support the text and are essential to proper learning of dermatology. Highlighted text zones aside the main text summarize the important points and are very welcome.

Rarer lesions and, most importantly, malignant lesions, are thoroughly treated. The chapter on melanoma is particularly well illustrated and developed. For those interested by

dermatoscopy, a complete chapter is present, covering the essential practical notions pertaining to it. Many tables and algorithms are given allowing a highlighted approach.

In summary, this book, this book fulfills its promises. It is a very good guide to diagnosis and treatment of cutaneous tumors. The author shows a remarkable practical sense and certainly benefits from an extensive experience, which will benefit all his readers.

Response from Dr. Mileham Hayes

Your reviewer is absolutely correct in that, worldwide, dermatologists are in short supply, and it would be a tragedy if a melanoma were missed by a general practitioner or a dermatologist's time wasted by having benign lesions referred to him. To counter the epidemic of both melanoma and skin cancers confirmed by audited histopathology, Australian general practitioners responded by establishing private skin clinics and embarked on progressive examined specific training by two universities and the Skin Cancer College of Australasia, thus "raising the bar" and best utilising dermatologists' and plastic surgeons' expertise.

The aim of my text was to equip the "army," uniquely in one book, with the full spectrum of practical essentials, not

only for the melanomas and skin cancers, but also the many look-alike benign lesions. After all, 90% of cutaneous lesions are benign, and further, as my companion volume *Practical Skin Cancer Surgery* (Churchill Livingstone, 2014) points out, "well over 90% of skin cancers and melanomas can be diagnosed and completely excised in the medical practitioner's clinic, office or rooms, under local anaesthetic to the world's best standards and technical proficiency."

I cannot say if our methods "seem to be efficient in controlling these epidemics," but I can say we have the best survival figures in the world, due to early detection. I regard this as a most satisfactory response and, without any implied arrogance, may be worth a look by other countries, especially where, as detailed in my book, melanomas are so much thicker when diagnosed.

Note from Book Review Editor

I am glad to welcome Dr. Christian Lefebvre, dermatologist, a collaborator to the Book Review Section of this journal. I would like to remind all readers that if they would like to propose a review of their own, they would be welcome.

François Milette