



Book Reviews

AO ASIF Principles in Spine Surgery

Edited by M Aebi, JS Thalgott & JK Webb
Published by: Springer-Verlag, 244 pp.
ISBN 3 540 6263 4 £114.50

This book is called The Principles in Spine Surgery but it is much more accurately named in its preface – a manual for the AO concepts and the use of their implants. The book, in fairness, says no-one should use the technique unless an experienced spinal surgeon.

There is not a great deal on indications, it is all about technique. The chapter on Classification of Thoracic and Lumbar Injuries is excellent but after that there is little mention of alternative treatments other than surgery. The book is beautifully illustrated, as all Springer-Verlag books are.

It is difficult to know for whom the book is written other than those people who are spinal surgeons and are thinking of changing to the AO system. If they did change to the AO system they would definitely need to go on a course before using the book as a reference.

Some of the controversial techniques such as hook-screw fixation make no mention about the indications but simply technique. It is a book that should be in the library of a hospital that is treating spinal injuries and spinal deformities. It could also be read by trainees prior to the inter-collegiate examinations.

The cost of £114 for 240 pages is expensive but then it is for a limited market and has a lot of very good line illustrations.

M Sullivan

Neuroimaging, Edition 1

Author: J O Greenberg
Publishers: McGraw-Hill Publishing: 614 pp.
ISBN 0 97 024308 5 £95.00

This book is designed to be an imaging companion to Adams and Victor's Principles of Neurology and is aimed at both practitioners and residents in Neurology, Neurosurgery, Psychiatry and Radiology. There are 22 Chapters divided into the following parts: (1) cardinal manifestations of neurologic disease; (2) the neurology of ageing; (3) the major categories of neurologic disease; (4) special section on specific imaging modalities. Of the 38 authors, 24 are Neurologists and eleven are Radiologists.

The book is well bound and of a good size. The price is very reasonable. The text is generally good and references comprehensive. Unfortunately the overall content has been defined by the desire to follow closely the outline of a specific text book of neurology. This results in material being included which would be a surprise in any other text book of neuroimaging, and omissions which are baffling. Conventional angiography, a major component of neuro-radiology, receives little mention. There is repetition of some subject matter without coverage in depth.

The illustrations are of variable quality ranging from good to very poor. Both computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging are sufficiently mature imaging techniques for this not to be necessary or acceptable.

I cannot recommend this as a comprehensive or introductory textbook of neuroimaging.

Dr Simon Barker
Consultant Neuroradiologist

Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine 14th Edition

Edited by: A Fauci, E Braunwald, K Isselbacher, J Wilson, J Martin, D Kasper, S Hauser, D Longo
Publishers: McGraw-Hill 1998-02-16 2750 pp. ISBN: 0 07 020291 5 £81.50

This is a veritable treasure house of information: 2569 pages, two appendices, an index of 170 pages, four colour atlases, abbreviated contents and topical contents. All this put together by eight editors and a mind-boggling 375 contributors (the list of contributors alone covers 10 pages), and an overall weight of some 7 lbs or 3 kgs. This is more of an encyclopaedia than a textbook.

Spinal cord injury comes in the section on Traumatic Injuries of the Head and Spine by Allan Ropper, Professor of Neurology at Tufts University School of Medicine. Clearly this massive volume is not going to be purchased solely because of what is said about spinal cord injury. However, as the author points out, approximately 10 000 patients a year in the United States become paraplegic or quadriplegic because of spinal cord injuries and most of these are young and otherwise healthy. It seems a pity, therefore, that the total amount on spinal cord trauma amounts to less than 2 pages in this vast work. This is the reviewer's only real criticism but even this has to be muted since the aim is clearly to provide a neurology section applicable to general internal medicine.

No spinal unit or spinal injury specialist is going to buy this book because of its section on trauma but it undoubtedly is a first class reference book and deserves a place on the shelf of every spinal unit. Perhaps it would be easier to use if it were in two or even three volumes since the single volume format is unwieldy.

It is well-produced, well-illustrated and remarkably good value. It is wholeheartedly recommended.

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Endoscopy of the Central and Peripheral Nervous System

Wesley King, John Frazee, Antonio De Salles
Published By: Thieme. 260. pp
ISBN: 3 13 103611 7 Price: DM 385

This well produced and somewhat lavishly illustrated book encompasses the modern concepts of neuro endoscopy. The

range of lesions that can be treated by this method are clearly somewhat impressive, but, in a book of this kind, a chapter on anatomy is not only probably out of place, but is inappropriately inserted as Chapter 5 when, surely, it should have been the first chapter. Similarly, a later chapter on endoscopy of carpal tunnel syndrome contains the symptoms and signs of that disorder and one does wonder why the authors allowed this curious combination of advanced techniques and some basic neuroscience to form an inappropriate mixture.

The range of lesions that can be treated endoscopically, as covered in the book, might leave one wondering whether there is any other method and, of course, one day there may not be and endoscopy and its related techniques will probably be the norm.

The format of the book is generally good and spelling and grammatical errors very few. However, some seemed

to be concentrated in an otherwise very good chapter on colloid cysts and these included the statement that patients may 'experience' sudden death and that colloid cysts 'form 2% of all gliomas'; in the comparison between endoscopic and open methods of removal the latter only included the transcallosal method and not the transcortical route.

On the whole, the authors' intentions are largely achieved, but the book is likely to be valuable to the specialist only. The quality and general standard of production justify the cost and the book can certainly be considered to be an acceptable purchase.

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