



Book Reviews

Tetraplegia and Paraplegia

Edited by Ida Bromley

Churchill Livingstone, 267 pp. £27.50

ISBN 0 443 05872 5

This book aims to provide guidance on the assessment and treatment principles of spinal cord injured patients from admission towards maintenance of maximum independence.

It is presented in a user-friendly format supported by excellent diagrams and appendices.

The new edition updates us on aspects of respiratory care, gait with functional electronic stimulation and reciprocal gait orthoses, high cervical lesions and medical treatments of spasticity.

A good basic explanation of changes in motor control and some of the biomechanical properties of muscle in incomplete lesions is given. Physiotherapy's role in influencing plasticity within the CNS, whilst capitalizing on appropriate compensatory activity is emphasized. More photographs demonstrating handling skills would have been useful.

The importance of identifying outcome measures for research purposes is identified and there is a useful expanded section on scales of impairment and function.

The book is well referenced.

There is however some stereotyped language throughout—e.g. describing the 'metamorphosis which occurs when a tetraplegic or paraplegic patient evolves into a spinal man', alarming if the patient started as a woman!

There is a concentration on conservative management of spinal instability: a discussion of advances in surgical techniques and the implications for rehabilitation in terms of early mobilization and potential complications would make for a more comprehensive picture.

Nevertheless this book provides a solid grounding in the principle aspects of spinal cord injury rehabilitation. It remains a valuable reference source for any physiotherapist with involvement in the treatment of spinal cord injuries, not only within spinal injury centers, but also within centers treating non-traumatic pathologies e.g. degenerative, inflammatory, and tumours.

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The Textbook of Spinal Surgery

Author: KH Bridwell

Published by: Lippincott-Raven 1997 2576 pp.

ISBN 0 397 51384 4 \$375/Int'l \$431.25

This is an authoritative reference book. It consists of two volumes and deals with a vast array of conditions affecting

the spine. The information is exhaustively comprehensive with a definitive essay on individual subjects. The first 274 pages review current biomechanical concepts of spinal fusion techniques, scoliosis correction and complications. The reader is taken through operative techniques, anatomy and anatomical approaches to the spine plus a thorough review of cord monitoring techniques.

For the next 2112 pages, spinal operative details, diagnosis and investigation are described. Modern implant systems (eg. Cotrel-Dubousset and Kanneda etc) are mentioned in great detail, as are the management of adult and idiopathic, paralytic and degenerative scoliosis, the meningocele etc. The section on lumbar and intervertebral disc surgery in Chapter 88 seemed particularly thorough, and of interest to readers of 'Spinal Cord' is Chapter 96—on 'Cervical spine fractures:— changing management concepts'. The author here, is an 'activist' surgeon. Non-operative management is little mentioned. This is an Orthopaedic Surgeon's management of such cases, and for those readers used to conservative treatment the Chapter is helpful, but could be misinterpreted.

The authors stress that the 'surgical management of the cervical spine fracture' is demanding, and requires a careful knowledge and appreciation for both the biomechanics and neuro-anatomy...'. Similar comments are seen in Chapter 98 about thoracic and lumbar fractures. We read a tell-tale statement.. 'although clinical evidence supports conservative treatment (refs) anatomic restoration and fusion... shortens hospitalisation time and prevents deformity and disability'.

Further Chapters on tumours, both intra-dural, spinal cord, extra-dural and vascular, plus infection problems are masterful. Artificial inter-vertebral discs, endoscopic spinal surgery, and in Chapter 128 patho-physiological and pharmacologic treatment of acute spinal cord injury is also discussed.

This though, is a reference book for Spinal Surgeons celebrating their position as masters of their craft. Spinal specialists should have these volumes; but the place for it in a Spinal Cord Injury Unit is small, and the price is high.

The book is nicely bound with excellent diagrams, and reasonable reproduction of radiographs.

The readership of 'Spinal Cord' will appreciate knowing where this book is in their Library, not least to delve into it's excellent reference lists.

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