



Book Review

Textbook of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery

Edited by PL Gildenberg & RR Tasker

Publishers: McGraw-Hill, Health Professions Division:
2174 pp. ISBN 0 07 23604 6 L270.00

Stereotactic and functional neurosurgery is a rapidly growing subspecialty, being applied by an increasing number of specialists. Mainly due to developments in computer technology it is no longer the exclusive working field of neurosurgeons alone but rather a field of collaboration between clinicians (eg neurosurgeons, neurologists, radiologists, radiotherapists, pain specialists), supportive experts (engineers, computer technologists) and manufacturers of stereotactic and software products. Applications and indications are changing and expanding (eg psychosurgery is becoming less popular whereas movement disorders and radiosurgery are increasing indications).

Stereotactic and functional neurosurgery are not so closely linked together anymore as they used to be (one could therefore prefer the terms stereotaxis and functional neurosurgery). Although both are still growing in mutual connection and dependence, at the same time they are growing into separate entities, like brother and sister from childhood to adolescence and adulthood. This growth process and its outcoming product never have been described before in such a conveniently arranged review, as in this book.

The two editors, Prof L Gildenberg and Prof R Tasker, both eminent in the field of stereotactic and functional neurosurgery and currently respectively former President of the World Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery, succeeded in obtaining the contribution of more than 300 authors: clinicians, pre-clinicians and basic researchers from all over the world. They present their expertise in 222 chapters, together constituting the five parts of the book, each of these being subdivided into different sections containing these 222 chapters.

The first part of the book deals with basic principles of stereotactic techniques, dwelling on the differences between frame-based and frameless systems and the stereotactic atlases.

Part 2 reviews image-guided stereotaxis, including stereotactic biopsy and craniotomy. Part 3 compiles data about stereotactic radiotherapy, including radiosurgery and brachytherapy. In part 4, the largest part of the book, called 'functional stereotaxis', the reader is informed in an updated way about functional procedures for movement disorders, spasticity, pain and epilepsy. Only ten pages are devoted to psychosurgery.

In Part 5, 12 chapters describe future technological advances. This book weighs about 4 kg, costs L 260.00, and contains 2174 pages. Is it worth its weight and price?

It sure is! It is a very well structured book, offering a comprehensive and complete overview of most recent developments in stereotaxis and functional neurosurgery. The book is very readable. At a first glance the reader is impressed by the large contribution offered by so many experts in the different fields. In my opinion it is to be considered as a first and complete bible of stereotaxis and of stereotactic and functional neurosurgery.

It is not meant to be used as a study book for the general practitioner. However it should not be absent on the book shelf of anyone applying stereotaxis or being involved in the practice of stereotactic and/or functional neurosurgery. As stated before these specialists are no longer neurosurgeons exclusively.

Michiel Staal, MD, PhD
Associate Professor of Neurosurgery
University Hospital, Groningen
The Netherlands