



Book Reviews

Surgical Approaches to the Spine

Edited by TJ Albert, RA Balderston, BE Northrup

Published by: *WB Saunders Company*. 224 pp.

ISBN 0 7216 4554 2 £89.00

This is a multi-authored book dedicated to the surgical approaches to the spine. In general, the chapters are well organised and the illustrations of surgical anatomy are useful and valid from a didactic point of view. Each chapter contains a clear message with a well-reasoned approach to the surgical anatomy of the area.

I was very impressed with some chapters. Chapter 3, in particular, which covers the subject of 'Anterior Upper Cervical Exposure', contains a 'state-of-the-art' description of what, by any standards, is a difficult and uncommon approach involving the split of the mandible and the tongue.

The division of the book makes logical progression from the cervical spine down to the lumbar spine and all major surgical routes to approach the spine are very well illustrated. It is of extreme value that each chapter ends with a brief, but exhaustive, analysis of the most common complications of that particular approach.

This book is designed for surgeons in training and is not intended to cover the indications for the various procedures, as the authors clearly point out in their preface. The only drawback to the book is that it does not cover micro-surgical techniques in spinal surgery which have now become part of the routine armamentarium of any surgeon who focuses on spinal diseases.

I recommend this book as an overview of surgical approaches to the spine with the drawback that it would have to be used in conjunction with other text dealing with micro-surgical aspects.

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Neurological Complications of HIV and AIDS

Authors: Said, Saimot, Lacroix and Tardieu.

Published by: *Harcourt Brace* 202 pp.

ISBN: 0-702018368 £62.95

This volume has been written by three well known and authoritative specialists in neurology, infectious diseases, paediatric neurology and neuropathology. It belongs to the collection (No. 34) of the series on 'Major Problems in Neurology' published by Saunders.

It consists of seven chapters, apart from the introduction: HIV-1 associated dementia complex, neoplasms of the nervous system, opportunistic infections of the CNS, spinal cord disorders in AIDS, neurological aspects of HIV-1 infections in children, peripheral nerve disease in HIV infected patients and related muscle diseases. It is mainly focused on the afflictions of the brain and its functions, whether in direct relation to HIV itself or the opportunistic (toxoplasmosis or cytomegalovirus) infections which seem to respond to treatment, as opposed to the infections by JC papovirus.

I have been particularly interested by several parts of the chapter on Spinal Cord Disorders in AIDS: transient acute myelopathy with paraplegia during the seroconversion stage, the pathogenesis of vacuolar lesions of the cord, clinically late in occurrence, with lower limb weakness, increased deep tendon reflexes and sphincter disturbances. Other entities such as HIV myelitis, Brown Sequard syndromes, degeneration of the gracile tracts are described. The opportunistic infections of the spinal cord are discussed: CMV infections, toxoplasmosis, lymphomas and ischaemic myelopathy. I was also interested by the chapter on the peripheral nerve lesions (PN) with the Guillain-Barré-like inflammatory polyneuritis, the autonomic disturbances and other PN disturbances. The rest of this well written chapter on PN lesions includes also the CMV neuropathies and the malignant lymphomas in HIV. Drug induced neuropathies are also discussed, which I think is nowadays relevant. The chapter on muscle diseases will be also very instructive for our readers.

This volume is, as usual in this series, well made and bound; the pathology figures (although in black and white) are good and instructive. The price nevertheless seems a little too high. The book includes at the end of all chapters, relevant references to the literature on the subject. It should not only interest the specialists in neurology, infectious diseases and pathology, but also those interested in neurorehabilitation, neuropsychology and social medicine. We have, all of us, just started to consider this rapidly growing, complex and human, problem. I can thoroughly recommend it.

Paul Dollfus