
Book Reviews

Critiques de livres

CANCER SURGERY. James C. Harvey and Edward J. Beattie. 599 pp. Illust. W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia; W.B. Saunders Canada, Toronto. 1996. \$167. ISBN 0-7216-5173-9

It is surprising that in an era of multidisciplinary combined planning and treatment of oncologic disease, a textbook of cancer surgery would be of value. In the 1990s, most cancer surgeons would consider themselves to be surgical oncologists, so even the title *Cancer Surgery* has a historic ring to it. Nevertheless, we must recognize that although cancer treatment requires accurate diagnosis and staging and aggressive surgical management, frequently the diagnosis is made only at operation, so much cancer surgery is performed by non-oncologic surgeons. It is to that group that this book is directed. The authors' intent is to cover cancers of the various anatomic regions of the body as an up-to-date reference, primarily for generalists and for surgeons who are cancer specialists but wish to refresh themselves about a specific area preoperatively. They have clearly met their primary objective: this is an excellent source book for general surgeons, general surgical residents or subspecialty residents. The level of detail in this text, however, is inadequate for the practising surgical oncologist.

Despite this limitation, the book is an outstanding review of oncologic surgery and adjuvant therapy for common and rare tumours of virtually every anatomic site in the body. A few chapters, such as that on head and neck cancer and on soft-tissue sarcomas of the extremities, reflect the idiosyncratic views of the chapter authors rather than the overall level of knowledge in the area. However, most of the other chapters are well balanced and provide a generally accepted standard

approach to management, treatment options and adjuvant therapy as well as excellent, up-to-date references on outcomes of various types of treatment. The writing style varies somewhat with the chapter; however, this is not unusual in a multiauthored textbook. The editors have done an excellent job in ensuring that there is consistency throughout.

The text is well illustrated with numerous radiographs, anatomic drawings and "atlas style" drawings of specific complex techniques. There are summary tables emphasizing treatment outcomes in randomized trials in virtually every chapter. The references are inclusive, and the index is excellent.

Although this text might be somewhat limited in its appeal to specialist surgical oncologists, it is an outstanding reference for general surgeons and surgical residents. It should find a welcome and well-deserved place in the reference library of every division of general surgery.

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OPERATIVE LAPAROSCOPY AND THORACOSCOPY. Edited by Bruce V. MacFadyen, Jr. and Jeffrey L. Ponsky. 959 pp. Illust. Lippincott-Raven, Philadelphia. 1996. US\$235. ISBN 0-7817-0279-8

The days of explosive growth in the field of laparoscopy are over. Surgeons are taking a step back to consolidate the procedures they have learned, focus on safety and evaluate whether these procedures bring real benefit to their patients and the health care sys-

tem at large. This book of current practice of operative laparoscopy and thoracoscopy arrives in time to give the laparoscopic surgeon a comprehensive operative manual of all the established and developing laparoscopic and thoracoscopic procedures and their current status in clinical practice. The format of each chapter is standardized. It starts with a short section on anatomy, followed by preoperative planning and intraoperative management and surgical technique, all illustrated with drawings and colour photographs, then a section on complications and finally a concluding section, emphasizing the advantages and limitations and current status. At the end of each chapter is an enclosed section entitled "surgical pearls," representing the personal experience of the authors.

The book is organized into 12 sections with 53 chapters. The first section contains 9 chapters on general considerations of laparoscopy, including history, anesthesia, training and credentialling, economic considerations, technology, sterilization, video imaging, electro- and laser surgery, and basic techniques and suturing skills. The second section (2 chapters) covers exploratory laparoscopy and its role in the management of acute abdomen. The bulk of the text comprises 8 sections (34 chapters), which are organ specific: the gallbladder — 3 chapters on elective cholecystectomy, acute cholecystitis, and cholecystostomy; bile duct — 5 chapters on transcystic exploration, choledochotomy, cholangiography, transhepatic lithotripsy and choledoscopy; the pancreas, liver and spleen — 5 chapters on cholecystojejunostomy, pancreatic pseudocysts, pancreatoduodenectomy, hepatectomy and splenectomy; vertebral column — 1 chapter on spinal access; retroperitoneum — 3 chapters on nephrec-