
Book Reviews

Critiques de livres

CARDIAC SURGERY — SAFEGUARDS AND PITFALLS IN OPERATIVE TECHNIQUE. 2nd edition. Siavosh Khonsari. 336 pp. Illust. Lippincott–Raven Publishers, Philadelphia. 1996. US\$195. ISBN 0-397-51626-6

Overall rating: Good.

Strengths: Very clear and pertinent. Excellent pictures.

Weaknesses: Despite attempts to update, many important topics are not covered or only briefly mentioned.

Audience: Junior and senior cardiac surgery residents and junior attending staff.

As its name indicates, this book concentrates only on technical aspects of cardiac surgery. The author has added some very brief comments on pathophysiology and indications for only some of the operations mentioned. The book is, therefore, addressed to surgeons already thoroughly familiar with cardiac surgery techniques. It should not be considered as a major reference textbook.

Khonsari describes clearly most operations used in cardiac surgery. In this second edition, procedures that are no longer commonly used have been dropped from the text. This action might constitute a weakness since these operations might still be indicated and would have given the younger surgeon never exposed to such procedures a valuable source of information. The text is accompanied by excellent illustrations, depicting in great detail and with precision not only the proper technique but also the potential pitfalls. The addition of colour to the illustrations would have made this book invaluable, although it would likely have increased the price to prohibitive levels.

Although the author has attempted to include the more recent advances in operative technique, he has missed

quite a few. The section on mitral valve repair does not cover any of the more complex techniques, such as sliding leaflet plasty, posterior annular decalcification or chordal transfer. The chapter on surgery for ischemic heart disease does not mention the use of bilateral internal thoracic, right gastroepiploic and radial arteries as very well accepted and now commonly used alternative conduits for coronary revascularization. There is no section covering surgery for arrhythmias. These are some of the most obvious overlooked topics. The omissions are likely related to the fact that this is a single-author text. In this era of super-specialization, even cardiac surgery has evolved to the point where no surgeon can claim to be proficient in all aspects of the specialty. Therefore, the book would have been greatly strengthened by the assistance of other contributors.

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MANAGEMENT OF EXTRACRANIAL CEREBROVASCULAR DISEASE. Edited by Keith Calligaro, Dominic DeLaurentis and William Baker. 217 pp. Illust. Lippincott–Raven Publishers, Philadelphia. 1997. Can\$95. ISBN 0-397-51655-X

This compact, readable text contains contributions from 38 authors on a variety of topics concerning the current management of extracranial vascular disease affecting the cerebral circulation. The 19 chapters are

divided into 3 parts: preoperative assessment, indications for surgery and surgical technique. A number of important, controversial issues are addressed, and although the opinions expressed by some of the authors cannot be supported fully by published scientific evidence, they will be of interest and provide foci for discussion and further investigation.

The first chapter analyses the costs involved in carotid artery surgery and points out areas for potential savings at all stages, from preoperative testing, through inpatient management to postoperative follow-up. This type of analysis is very useful in defining acceptable practice guidelines at a time when there is a growing gap between what technology can offer patients and what patients and society are willing to pay for medical care. Another chapter in the first part of the text questions the need for preoperative angiography in many patients being considered for carotid endarterectomy. Though clearly controversial, this discussion has important implications for risk management as well as cost control, as a significant component of the overall morbidity of extracranial cerebrovascular surgery is related to angiography.

In the second part of the book, one chapter deals with the emerging interest in transluminal angioplasty and stenting as an alternative to open surgery for extracranial occlusive disease. The authors point out the importance of implementing large randomized controlled trials to determine the relative merits of and specific indications for endovascular versus traditional surgical treatment, while urging that such trials be deferred until adequate expertise is developed in the endovascular procedures to permit their valid assessment.