

Book Reviews

Critiques de livres

CONCISE SURGERY. AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE.

Edited by Kevin Lafferty and John Rennie. 498 pp. Illust. Arnold, a member of the Hodder Headline group, London, UK; Oxford University Press, Canada, Toronto. 1998. Can\$59.50. ISBN 0-340-70611-2

This excellent textbook is designed specifically for medical students on their surgical rotations. It has 29 contributors, 2 of whom have edited the book in a uniform style. It covers most areas of clinical surgery in a brief but up-to-date and comprehensive manner.

The first 9 chapters present the traditional basic issues of shock, fluids, infection, trauma and burns in a simple and clinically relevant manner, accompanied by useful illustrations and tables. The next 10 chapters relate to the systems in surgery such as brain, spine and nerves, arteries and veins, lymphatics, skin, endocrine glands, face and neck, breast and chest. A 9-page chapter on day-care surgery summarizes the types of procedures, criteria and preoperative work-up, including an algorithm for preparing a care document. It introduces quality assessment to the management of day-care cases, teaching and training and a vision for the future. Minimal access surgery is discussed generally, with examples of laparoscopic cholecystectomy and other video-assisted procedures. Pediatric and abdominal surgery are presented, in point form, in the next 9 chapters. The final 3 chapters cover urology, the last dealing briefly with organ procurement and transplantation.

The book has the right balance of colour and black-and-white illustrations and diagrams to assist comprehension. An original presentation is a coloured box with lists of important facts highlighted without repetition in the text. The format consists of short or bulleted paragraphs and simple lan-

guage, which help the busy student. At the end of each chapter is a coloured "crib box" with a summary of the main concepts.

The information is accurate and readily usable. It is not, however, a textbook that covers all the objectives of the surgical curriculum, and it needs to be supplemented by other surgical books. Overall, it is a very useful small book that could be recommended to students rotating in surgical disciplines during their clerkship.

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MEDICAL MANAGEMENT OF THE SURGICAL

PATIENT. 2nd edition. Edited by Geno J. Merli and Howard H. Weitz. 410 pp. Illust. W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia; Harcourt Brace & Co., Canada, Ltd., Toronto. 1998. Can\$59.95. ISBN 0-7216-6976-X

With the advent of more sophisticated surgical techniques and the availability of better perioperative clinical monitoring, patients with complex medical problems are now frequently referred for surgery. Consequently, to minimize perioperative morbidity and mortality, today's medical consultant on the surgical service must be able to cope with an ever-increasing array of challenging clinical problems. In this second edition, the 30 contributing authors, whose backgrounds span internal medicine, surgery and anesthesia, set out to provide a modern and comprehensive approach to the perioperative care of the surgical patient.

The book is divided into 21 chapters, each offering an approach to prob-

lems commonly seen on surgical services. Topics include all the main areas of perioperative medicine and range from the usefulness of preoperative testing to the care of the surgical patient with a substance abuse problem. Other perennial, thorny areas, such as the prophylaxis of infectious and thromboembolic complications, are given careful consideration. Special attention is devoted to the elderly, the pregnant patient and the patient with malignant disease. Welcome additions are 2 new chapters dealing with the assessment of patients with psychiatric illness and the management of the patient with rheumatic disease. For the nonsurgeon, a series of appendices provides telegraphic overviews of common surgical techniques, listing their indications, type of anesthesia required, anticipated blood loss, death rate and major postoperative complications; these will quickly become favourites of the resident staff.

This book is well written and easy to read. Although illustrations are few, the tables are clear and concise and ideal for quick consultation. A short list of selected references comes in handy for interested readers.

In summary, Merli and Weitz have put together a practical, accessible and portable guide for the physician involved with the primary care of the surgical patient. I see this book as a useful reference source for general internists, residents training in surgical and medical specialties, and possibly nurse practitioners.

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A PRIMER ON AMPUTATIONS AND ARTIFICIAL LIMBS. George Murdoch and A. Bennett Wilson. 295 pp. Illust. Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Ltd., Springfield, Ill. 1998. US\$63.95 (clothbound), \$US49.95 (paperbound). ISBN 0-398-06800-3 (clothbound), 0-398-06801 (paperbound)

A primer implies a basic text that covers fundamental concepts, basic techniques and modern management decisions. The text should reflect modern teaching and be based on peer-reviewed critical analysis. To that end, this book succeeds admirably.

The material forming the backbone of this work was established in 1990 at an international consensus conference on amputation surgery in Glasgow, Scotland, attended by surgeons, prosthetists and bioengineers from 10 countries.

The book is intended primarily for the surgeon who may perform only a few amputations a year. In addition, its content is targeted to surgeons-in-training and represents an excellent source book for the nonsurgeon member of the amputation team who wishes to learn about current surgical prosthetic thinking.

The book is divided into 3 sections. The first 30 pages cover the historical development of upper and lower limb prostheses since the early 1930s. The second section, comprising 135 pages, is devoted to surgical principles, including methods of determining amputation levels, the neuropathic foot and technical details of the commonest amputations. The emphasis in the text is on applying anatomic and bio-

mechanical principles to the performance of successful amputation. This section emphasizes lower limb amputation in greatest detail, in particular femoral, tibial and foot amputations, as well as the Syme disarticulation. Individual attention is briefly given to each upper extremity level amputation and somewhat unexpected emphasis is given to the Krukenberg procedure as well as cineplasty. The remaining 105 pages contain an excellent review of upper and lower limb prostheses. In this chapter, the many currently available components are illustrated and described and the problems of their fitting, construction and functioning are discussed.

The writing style is lucid and lively and the authors are obviously knowledgeable. Moreover, because the book is the product of just 2 authors, the writing style is consistent throughout the text. One of the authors is an eminently qualified academic orthopedic surgeon and the other a mechanical engineer, having recognized skills in teaching amputation surgery and prosthetic management, respectively.

Although this book is a primer, even the experienced amputation surgeon will glean a few new ideas. A nice solution to the problem of foot stabilization after calcaneal excision is illustrated. In addition, a good biomechanical explanation of the implications of stump length after femoral amputation is provided. The novice or occasional amputation surgeon will be well rewarded, especially by the in-depth presentations on the issues surrounding tibial, femoral and Syme amputations. The experi-

enced amputation surgeon with little day-to-day contact in multidisciplinary amputation clinics will also be rewarded by the concise review of current prosthetic solutions, prescription prerequisites and adaptations available for the more active patient. Good basic information is provided in this respect. However, an all-too-brief chapter on childhood amputation and prosthetic fitting might have benefited by a few more pages and illustrations.

If you are looking for a summary of principles, techniques and consensus statements on the decision-making process involved in amputation surgery, this book will appeal to you. But if you wish a text with detailed drawings, vividly illustrating surgical step-by-step procedures, you will be disappointed. Unfortunately, the illustrations provided are incomplete and inconsistent in their detail, having been drawn from multiple sources previously published. Many line diagrams and displays of anatomy are so small and poorly reproduced as to be useless other than as a general guide.

I would recommend this book to those occasional amputation surgeons who wish a quick review of current principles and practices and to paramedical professionals involved in multidisciplinary amputation surgery and rehabilitation.

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