

Book reviews

Skeletal trauma. Basic science, management and reconstruction, third edition

Browner, Jupiter, Levine and Trafton, 2626 pages. Saunders, 2003
ISBN 0-7216 – 9175-7

This third edition of a modern textbook of trauma and fracture surgery comes in two beautiful volumes in glossy hardcover. The two volumes contain more than 2600 pages organized into five sections and 64 chapters. A total weight of more than 8 kg makes them volumes that are very hard to read anywhere other than sitting at a table, and they will probably fall apart during handling due to their weight. For this reason, I think three or four volumes would have been more appropriate.

Both volumes are very well illustrated with drawings, radiographs of good quality and—in some chapters—photographs of good quality from operations and from operated plastic bone models illustrating fixation techniques.

Each chapter contains a large reference list. In general, the references seem to be adequate and the lists are up to date, at least until 2001. I have used this book as a reference for the past 6 months. The indexation is adequate for this purpose and I usually manage to find what I am looking for. The text is comprehensive. The first chapters concern history, the biology of fracture and soft tissue injuries and the biomechanics of fractures. Principles of nonoperated and operated fixations are well balanced and suitable reading for specialists in general orthopedics, as well as for surgeons who are more specialized in fractures.

So far, I have found very few items that (to my mind) are not quite appropriate.

The commonly discussed sacral fractures of U- or H-type could be addressed in a better way. For

ankle fractures, the Cedell technique with pins and cerclage wires, which is widely used in Sweden, cannot be found in the books. Concerning “Distal targeting of locking holes in femur”, a new technique was described by me in *Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica* 1998 (69: 320-321) and is widely used in Scandinavia, but is not mentioned in either volume. Otherwise, the thoughts and suggested treatments could generally be accepted in Scandinavia without too much disagreement.

Among the 120 contributors to these books, many of the (currently) most cited authors of fracture treatment can be found. They have all been eager to show us what modern fracture treatment is, and I think they have succeeded. The third edition contains more about complications and posttraumatic reconstruction than the second edition, and addresses the needs of the practicing fracture surgeon – giving good advice on how to avoid technical difficulties and pitfalls and how to manage possible complications.

At present, I think that this is the reference book of choice. The only major drawback I have encountered thus far is that the volumes are too heavy and therefore not readable anywhere else than at a heavy table.

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Severe traumatic defects of the upper limb

Alain C. Masquelet and Acacio C. Ferreira, 333 pages. Martin Dunitz, 2003

ISBN 1-84184-243-5

In the ninth congress of the Federation of European Societies for Surgery of the Hand (FESSH), Lisbon, June 25–28, 2003, A. Masquelet and A. Ferrera arranged a workshop on “Severe Traumatic Defects of the Upper Limb”. The revised lectures have been collected and published by Martin Dunitz in the present book. The aim, as presented in the introduction, is to provide some answers to the questions of how to repair severe defects in bone and soft tissue. The main chapter headings are Flap Techniques, Reconstruction of Bone, Joints, Nerves and Tendons, ending with Compound Transfers and General Indications.

Most of the chapters are 8–10 pages long, including illustrations. The first five chapters describe pedicled and free flaps in 44 pages, including figures and references. The figures are mainly black and white photos of “representative cases”, with only a few sketched figures. With such competent authors, the descriptions of the various procedures are of course correct. The ambition, however, to cover such a vast and complicated subject in so few pages inevitably results in a presentation which is too condensed. It cannot be used as a guide in the

The next seven subchapters are devoted to bone and joint defects. There are some authoritative articles based on the vast clinical experience of large centres, such as that of M. Woods on vascularized fibular graft and that of Brunelli on arthrodesis of the three main joints of the arm. The intense laboratory and clinical experimental work with bone and joint allografts, epiphyseal transfer and bone substitutes are given up to date reviews. Subchapters 13 to 15 deal with nerve defects. Merle and Limb describe and discuss the different clinically used nerve grafts, and Lundborg writes on the role of tissue interpositioning in nerve defects from a more experimental point of view. Both articles conclude that some synthetic material, loaded with

growth promoting factors, will be the next alternative to nerve grafts. In the last of the three chapters on nerve defects, Frey and Giovanoli present a series of seven successful clinical cases of end-to-side neurography.

In Chapter 16, Land et al. succeed in clarifying the history, classification and execution of conventional grafting of both extensor and flexor tendons in 23 pages, an impressive feat. The many black and white photos with “typical cases”, however, do not add much additional information. Guimberteau presents his technique for vascularized flexor tendon grafts, first described in 1989 and illustrated here with two successful cases.

The next main chapter heading is Compound Transfers and the first subchapter deals with Composite Tissue Transfer. The attempt to cover so vast a subject in eight pages including illustrations is not very successful. Piñal restricts himself to describing soft tissue and tendon reconstruction in the dorsal and thenar regions in another subchapter. It turns out to be a wise restriction, and the subject is treated in an interesting and comprehensive—if not completely exhaustive—way.

The last main chapter heading is General Indications. Nascimento stresses and justifies the importance of radical debridement and preservation of all vital and useful structures in a subchapter called “Principles of Emergency Reconstruction”. The principles of secondary repair of compound defects are developed by Masquelet. A clinical example of his novel foreign body induced membrane for prevention of resorption of large bone grafts is notable. The chapter on surgical management of infection and the one on reconstruction of large defects in children are both very systematic and textbook-like.

The book reflects the European experience with a strong southern slant; 38 out of 47 listed authors reside in countries using Romanic languages. The

amount of knowledge and experience presented in the book is impressive. Inevitably, however, the publication suffers from its origin in lectures. On the one hand, there is considerable overlap between the different articles; on the other, some subjects which would be of some interest, such as tendon transfer and bone lengthening, do not have any chapter devoted to them. This book is not a textbook. It serves as an interesting up to date account of the subject from a southern European

point of view, and for those who attended the workshop it must be valuable to have an authorised version of the material presented instead of having to rely on lecture notes.

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