

## Book reviews

### *Current management of scaphoid fractures. Twenty questions answered*

Izge Günal, Nicholas Barton, Ismail Calli (eds), The Royal Society of Medicine Press Ltd, London 2002  
ISBN 1-85315-518-7

This book was written as a follow-up of the review article by Nicholas Barton in 1992, called “Twenty questions about scaphoid fractures” (*J Hand Surg* 17B, 289-310, 1992). 9 orthopedic and hand surgeons with research published in this field were asked to answer the questions posed by Nicholas Barton, with some modifications, 10 years after the original publication. The questions deal with methods of diagnosis, preferred treatments, complications, such as nonunion, and salvage procedures after failed treatment.

In my view, the concept of this book is interesting. Personal experience described by experts in a special field is always valuable and the book deals with an important and in many respects, still unsolved clinical problem. However, the answers to the questions asked seem to be based rather on the contributing authors’ personal preferences and cultural backgrounds than on objective findings from scientific studies in this field. In the discussion on treatment algorithms, one author even states that

“medicine is an art, not a science; all patients are different, and deserve to be so treated”.

The economical resources of health care in various countries also seem to affect the answers. Some recommend that CT or MRI should be standard diagnostic tools and an operation with internal fixation of all scaphoid fractures, except the stable and undisplaced ones in growing persons. In a global perspective, these suggestions are unrealistic, and one of the British contributors states that there is in fact “no absolute indication for surgical fixation of the broken scaphoid”.

In conclusion, this book does not answer many questions, but it does indeed highlight the controversies and regional differences in clinical tradition and the lack of good basic clinical research.

**Marianne Arner**

*Hand Unit, Department of Orthopedics, University Hospital, SE-221 85 Lund, Sweden*