

Essentials of hand surgery

John Gray Seiler III (editor), 304 pages, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 2002
ISBN 0-7817-3585-8

Hand secrets (second edition)

Peter J L Jebson and Morton L Kasdan (eds), 352 pages, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 2002
ISBN 1-56053-464-8

Hand pearls

Matthew J Concannon and Jack Hurov, 245 pages, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 2002
ISBN 1-56053-463-X

Pocket books in hand surgery aiming at giving as much relevant data as possible in relatively few pages seem to be increasingly popular. The target group is mainly students and trainees in hand surgery as these books frequently contain basic information about physical findings, diagnosis and treatment in common injuries and diseases. Such a book may also be used in the trauma room by the less experienced hand surgeon or orthopedic surgeon to make decisions about emergency care. In Scandinavia the textbook by Göran Lundborg (*Handkirurgi, skador, sjukdomar, diagnostik och behandling, Studentlitteratur 1999*) is used for this purpose.

The three books in this review are all variations on this theme; they contain a lot of valuable information in a convenient pocket-size.

Essentials of hand surgery is a multi-authored textbook of 304 pages with 172 pictures, written by a committee of the American Society for Surgery of the Hand. The aim is to cover the whole area of hand surgery, including embryology, anatomy, hand trauma, diseases of the hand and upper extremity, congenital hand deformities, pain syndromes and rehabilitation, 38 chapters in all. This means that the information given in each chapter is brief and somewhat superficial. Congenital anomalies, for example, are covered in a single chapter of only eight pages with very short descriptions of a few common deformities. The chapter "Bites", on the other hand, is 10 pages long and includes all

types of snake, spider and scorpion bites, which may reflect the difference between American and Scandinavian conditions. The organization and presentation of the material are not well-arranged, chapters on injuries and trauma are mixed up with diseases. The lay-out of this book is of ordinary textbook quality with illustrations in the form of pencil drawings or photographs. The drawings, although only black-and-white, are good and informative. The chapter on anatomy, however, would have benefited from pictures in color.

This book can be described as an American version of Lundborg's Swedish textbook, but he used a modern and educational lay-out with a well-arranged presentation of the material; the American book has a more conventional design.

Hand secrets uses another approach to present basic knowledge in hand surgery to doctors and medical students: each chapter consists of many questions and answers that are frequently encountered in everyday practice. The questions are asked in 45 chapters about various aspects of hand surgery, including trauma and diseases. 72 American hand surgeons have asked the questions, some of which are very basic ("How many joints does each finger have?") while others are difficult ("What is the space of Poirier?"). Drawings, black-and-white photographs and x-rays illustrate some of the questions, and the answers to the questions are often informative. This is not a comprehensive textbook to be read from start to end, but each chapter has

a well up-dated bibliography at the end for further study. This book seems to be an invaluable source of questions to be used in problem-orientated education or in various test situations in hand surgery.

Hand pearls uses a third approach for education in hand surgery, which differs from the others. It comprises 65 case reports with detailed descriptions about the history, physical signs and laboratory findings in patients with hand trauma or symptoms in the upper extremity. One of the authors is a hand therapist, and much emphasis is placed on training and rehabilitation of patients with hand problems. Each case report contains a “Clinical Pearl” and a “Hand Therapy Pearl”, which are short sentences with important information. In the case of a mucoid cyst in the nail bed, for example, one Clinical Pearl is: “Resection of the underlying

osteophyte is mandatory in the surgical treatment of a mucoid cyst”, while the Hand Therapy Pearl states: “Pay attention to achieving full DIP joint extension of the operated finger”.

Presenting cases as a form of problem oriented education instead of giving lectures with textbook material has become increasingly popular for students and postgraduate education. This book describes a number of cases to be used for these purposes.

The bibliography at the end of each case can be used to find reference.

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