

Book reviews

Surgical rehabilitation of the upper limb in tetraplegia

Vincent R Hentz and Caroline Leclercq, 260 pages, W.B. Saunders, 2002

ISBN 0 7020 2271 3

In 1978, Erik Moberg published his book “The upper limb in tetraplegia. A new approach to surgical rehabilitation”. Since then, this book has been the “bible” for all who are interested in the topic of surgical reconstructive procedures on the upper limb in tetraplegia. During these 25 years since publication, many articles have been published and six international conferences on this subject have been held, but no one has tried to cover the whole field in a single book.

Now, Vincent Hentz from Stanford and Caroline Leclercq from Paris have filled this vacuum with their book, which apparently aims to become the new “bible” in this field. Apart from one chapter written by the two authors, it covers most aspects on tetraplegia of relevance to anyone dealing with such patients and especially those who are directly involved in reconstructive surgery on the upper limb. It can be useful for the surgeon, the occupational therapist, the physiotherapist and the physician in rehabilitation medicine.

It is very well illustrated with many drawings and photographs, which help one to understand various principles and procedures. Every chapter has its own references, which seem to be very appropriate, although I miss some recent ones, perhaps because of delays in printing? The various chapters are relevant, easy to consult and the index is good. All aspects of surgical rehabilitation

are covered, including the new field of functional electrical stimulation of the upper limb, which may help when conventional surgery cannot improve function.

The last chapter concerns the assessment of improvement after treatment. This task is not usually performed by doctors, which is noticeable to some extent. I believe that the participation of an experienced occupational therapist as a co-author would have improved the result. The book ends with a few appendices—protocols for various procedures. Like many other publications, these protocols do not make clear whether the patients are treated as in-patients or out-patients. In most of these protocols, massage of the scar is included as part of the therapy, which is definitely not done in Sweden.

Apart from these minor comments, I sincerely hope that it will become a part of the standard library of every unit involved in rehabilitation of patients with spinal cord injuries. I am convinced it will become the “bible” in this field for many years to come.

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The wrist

Richard H. Gelberman (ed), 528 pages, Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia 2002
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The second edition of "The Wrist", edited by Richard Gelberman, is a volume in the series, "Master Techniques in Orthopaedic Surgery". The aim of this series is to provide detailed, illustrated descriptions of useful surgical procedures, written by authorities in the respective field. The present book includes 35 liberally illustrated chapters divided into 11 sections.

To those familiar with the first edition, the new one has been supplemented with 6 entirely new chapters mainly of good quality, and the rest of the text has been revised considerably. The first section deals with routine surgical approaches and describes most of the commonly used incisions. The anatomical aspects dealing with the wrist ligaments, however, are not discussed and some less usual, but occasionally useful, approaches are not mentioned.

The second section is a survey of basic methods and techniques in wrist arthroscopy; it also briefly describes various ways of performing arthroscopic surgery. The illustrations in this chapter are of lower standard than in the rest of the book and although the text may serve as an introduction to those not very familiar with arthroscopy of the wrist, there are other publications that are more instructive in this field. The contents would probably be of little interest to experienced arthroscopists.

The third section includes 5 chapters on the treatment of distal radius fractures. Internal plate fixation is beautifully described and illustrated. Some important anatomical aspects about the way in which complications with external fixation can be avoided are pointed out, but this chapter omits the nonbridging technique, which is disappointing. Mini-invasive techniques and pinning as well as injection with Norian-SRS are also mentioned, but combinations of various techniques are not discussed and the reader is given very few guidelines on how to select the best procedure for the individual case.

Corrective osteotomy of malunited distal radius

fractures is well described in the only chapter in section 4, which surprisingly is entitled, "Non-unions of the distal radius", although other disturbances in healing, such as delayed union or pseudarthrosis, are not discussed. Sections 5 and 6 deal with treatment of scaphoid fractures and nonunions. Internal fixation of acute fractures is described by Herbert and Krimmer and is restricted to the use of Herbert screws. Other techniques are not mentioned and the section would have been improved by a more thorough review of various methods and approaches.

Treatment of nonunions is dealt with in 3 chapters concerning proximal pole fragments, conventional bone grafting and vascularized grafts. All these chapters are clearly written and contain valuable information, but the first two differ little, apart from the surgical approach used for fractures of the proximal pole or the distal two thirds of the bone, and could have been combined.

Section 7 includes 4 chapters on carpal instability and describes ligament suture of acute scapholunate injuries, a method of dorsal capsulodesis for chronic SL-instability, a review of perilunate dislocations and STT, or triscaphe, fusion. Carpal instability is a complex and difficult subject and the four chapters in this section do not by any means cover all types of instabilities and suggested treatments. Furthermore, surgical treatment of carpal instability is controversial and this section seems to lack a discussion on the potential benefits of surgery and indications for the different procedures.

Section 8 deals with the osteoarthrotic wrist and includes 4 illustrative chapters, 3 on partial and total wrist arthrodesis and one on proximal row carpectomy.

Section 9 concerns instability of the distal radioulnar joint and is one of the most instructive and complete in the book. Arthroscopic diagnosis and treatment of TFCC-lesions is well described as are several other procedures for stabilization of the DRU-joint.

However, as for the rest of the volume, some other alternatives are omitted and it is often difficult for the reader to find guidelines for selecting the best procedures. Wrist surgery in rheumatoid arthritis is the subject of section 10 and includes tenosynovectomy and basic information about extensor tendon reconstruction, two types of arthrodesis and total wrist arthroplasty, using the biaxial wrist implant.

The eleventh and last section is called, “other wrist disorders”, and under this vague heading, one chapter on Kienböck’s disease, one on DeQuervain’s disease and one on ganglion excision are found. Like most of the book, these chapters are also beautifully illustrated in great detail, but this section of some miscellaneous disorders also illustrates one of the problems with the book. The reader who would like a thorough description about the surgical treatment of DeQuervain’s disease and ganglion excision is probably not the same as he who would need information about the various types of surgical treatment of Kienböck’s disease, total wrist arthroplasty or arthroscopic

repair of TFCC lesions. It is therefore difficult to understand whom this book is really meant for. Both advanced procedures and more straightforward, common ones are described, but mostly without the necessary information to help the reader to choose the best treatment. Since this volume includes only a selection of procedures for many different types of wrist pathology, it would have gained considerably from a more thorough discussion on decision making in each section.

However, for those who already have such knowledge, the book provides step-by-step instructions of mostly excellent quality that are hardly available in printed form elsewhere. This could be of interest to trainees in wrist surgery and to wrist surgeons who would like an update on technical aspects of specific procedures.

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