

Book reviews

Surgery of spinal trauma

Jerome M Cotler, J Michael Simpson, Howard S An, and Christopher P Silveri (editors), 390 pages, Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, Philadelphia 2000

ISBN 0-683-18108-4

This textbook summarizes the current knowledge on spinal trauma. It is a traditional textbook in the sense that it starts with chapters on anatomy, pathophysiology, and biomechanics covering the basic knowledge on each subject. The principles of acute management of spinal trauma follow the ATLS concept, which can be considered the gold standard. One chapter deals with radiographic evaluation of spinal injuries. Plain radiographs and advanced techniques, consisting of MRI and spiral CT with sagittal reconstructions, are discussed in depth. The latter part of this chapter concerns the radiographic findings in various regions of the spine. Other special chapters deal with management of spinal cord injury, in both the acute and rehabilitation phases.

The second half of the book deals with treatment. The various areas of the spine are covered in different chapters. The subdivision goes into great detail—interestingly, the cervicothoracic junction has a chapter of its own. The chapters on treatment are subdivided into sections, e.g., evaluation, early management, surgical treatment, and conclusion. The traditional classifications of fractures are thoroughly described, as also are the traditional fixation techniques. However, the American treatment tradition shines through in the surgical management sections. In the cervical spine section, for instance, various cerclage wire techniques are given much space, whereas posterior plating is only very briefly described, and cervical spine pedicle screws are hardly mentioned. In the thoracolumbar region, the American and European traditions are more similar. Although hook devices predominate in the text, pedicle screw techniques are included. Pediatric spinal injury is covered in a couple of chapters where the specific di-

agnostic and therapeutic problems in this age group are dealt with.

The volume is richly illustrated with several hundred figures. These are generally of high quality and good size, often combined with simple pen sketches for clarification. Apart from radiographs, the surgical techniques are sometimes illustrated with pictures of the fixation device mounted on sawbones, a technique I find very useful.

In textbooks like this, there seems to be little connection between the chapters. Several topics are covered in more than one chapter. For example, the radiographic evaluation is repeated in almost all chapters, despite excellent coverage of the subject in the chapter concerned.

A very good feature of this textbook is the large number of key references in each chapter. Unfortunately, they are listed in order of appearance in the text, not alphabetically, which leads to difficulties in finding a specific reference. The general index is also good, making the book easy and quick to use as a reference.

In conclusion, this textbook summarizes the current knowledge of spinal trauma. Up-to-date specialists in their fields have written the various chapters and, thus, the topics are well covered. The target audience is probably the orthopedic or neurosurgical trainee who will take care of spinal trauma in the future. However, the book also fills a place on the bookshelf of the specialist in spinal trauma because of its easy access to detailed knowledge and up-to-date references.

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Disorders of the shoulder—Diagnosis and treatment

Joseph P Iannotti and Gerald R Williams, 1,168 pages, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 1999

ISBN 0-7817-1320-X

This is an excellent textbook covering most aspects of the shoulder problems encountered during routine practice. The editors together with 60 well-known shoulder surgeons and physiotherapists have created a classic-to-be.

All the major aspects of shoulder problems are discussed. This is clearly shown in the list of contents, which is easy to use. All chapters are well referenced, but American studies are preferred to European or others.

The book is very well illustrated, apart from arthroscopic pictures, which are of inferior quality. There are many drawings, photographs and intra-operative views adding information to the text. Most chapters include not only the diagnosis and treatment. Biomechanics, pathoanatomy, imaging techniques and rehabilitation are often presented. Complications and their treatment are usually discussed.

Since this is an American publication, most types of treatment represent the American way of solving the problem. Usually, these can be easily done in other parts of the world. However, I still cannot understand why diaphyseal fractures of the clavicle should be operated on, even when there is displacement of the bones. After reading this book, I still think that clavicular fractures should

be operated on only in very rare cases. I especially enjoyed a few sections:

– The authors include algorithms as illustrations in many chapters, both for evaluation and for treatment. Such algorithms are easy to understand and they boost my understanding of the correct way to think when evaluating a patient or when different methods of treatment are considered.

– Some chapters end with the author's preferred treatment. Although I do not always agree, it is really intriguing to study these parts.

– The classification especially of posterior instability has been modified. The authors suggest that a more anatomical classification should be used instead of the old etiological. I think this makes it easier to discuss treatment.

If you work with shoulder patients, this modern textbook is an excellent way to increase your knowledge and help you to handle even more complicated problems. To my mind, this book will become a reference textbook that will be used a lot in the years to come.

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