

Book reviews

Handbook of hip fracture surgery

Martyn J Parker, Glyn A Pryor and Karl-Göran Thorngren, 145 pages, Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford 1997
ISBN 0 7506 2179 6

The operative treatment of proximal femoral fractures is often left to the orthopedic trainee, although fixation of comminuted fractures in osteoporotic bone can present a formidable challenge to even the most experienced surgeon. No short compact textbook has been available which concentrates on the practical details of surgery and general management of these fractures. The authors' ambition is to give new trainees in the speciality a basic knowledge of hip fracture treatment in concise form.

The first part of this paperback gives a brief survey of the diagnosis and classification, without falling into details. The reader will also find a sufficient picture of the background factors and a review of treatment options.

The preoperative evaluation and treatment has its own short chapter, which is somewhat superficial, due to the nature of the book. The numerous associated diseases and other aspects to be considered in this connection are briefly mentioned, however.

The use of a fracture table and image intensifier which are essential for successful hip fracture management are well described in five pages, with clear illustrations and sufficient comprehensiveness.

The best parts of the book are the chapters on osteo-

synthesis for cervical, intracapsular fractures and extramedullary fixation of extracapsular fractures, which contain the available core-knowledge of these issues and reflect the practical knowledge of the authors. On the other hand, the technique of intramedullary fixation of extramedullary fractures is recommended and is described only for subtrochanteric fractures, although gamma nailing is widely used in trochanteric multifragment fractures. The surgical techniques of Austin, Moore and Thompson hemiarthroplasty are presented in detail.

The pictures and illustrations are of adequate quality. The list of references not given in the text are in alphabetic order at the end of the chapters and, for their length, are in harmony with the size of the book. The book is easy to read, partly thanks to the large font size and on the whole gives a balanced presentation of hip fracture surgery. Although it is meant for orthopedic trainees it may also be for the guidance of a more experienced orthopedic surgeon.

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Osteoarthritis

Kenneth D. Brandt, Michael Doherty and L. Stefan Lohmander, 600 pages, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Tokyo 1998
ISBN 0 19 262735 X

It is indeed a formidable task to edit a book about such a moot topic as osteoarthritis, or osteoarthrosis, the preferred term of the editors of a new multiauthor 600-page book. In "Osteoarthritis", Oxford University Press, 1998, Kenneth Brandt, Michael Doherty and Stefan Lohmander have mustered no less than 94 authors from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in an attempt to cover most aspects of this disorder—from paleontology and molecular markers to occupational therapy and social support. How have they succeeded? Overall, it is a most readable book which gives a good survey of this heterogeneous group of joint disorders, lumped together under the heading of osteoarthrosis—or let us abbreviate it as OA to avoid the question of terminology, which is certainly more inflated than the disorder per se.

The preface of the book states that it is written principally for the clinical rheumatologist—illustrating the varying health care organizations in different countries—but the book clearly contains a wealth of invaluable information for most health care personnel involved in the management of one of the largest and most important diagnosis groups in terms of money and morbidity.

Inevitably, in a multiauthor book there are areas of repetition and contradiction. Some of the writing would have benefited from a more ruthless editorial approach. For instance, not all chapters contain a brief summary or a conclusion, invaluable for the reader desiring a survey of the forest before examining the individual trees. Perhaps in the next edition the au-

thors might consider trying to enforce such a policy on their willful contributors.

The text is well indexed and the chapters are amply referenced. However, the average reader might benefit from the selection of a few very subjectively chosen suggested readings, say, half a dozen for each chapter. Today, mention of links to websites might also be useful for many readers.

Certain contributions stand out in terms of content, particularly in the part dealing with the pathogenesis of OA, but generally the standard of the text is very high. There are other chapters that have a rather oblique approach—I am particularly fond of Handler's chapter addressing the question: Why does the patient with OA hurt? There are other clinically very useful contributions on, e.g., diagnostic imaging and, not least, an appendix containing protocols and criteria for clinical trials.

The book is richly illustrated, but as usual the quality of radiographs varies considerably. Also, when the editors had succeeded in the notoriously difficult task of persuading the publishers to include high quality colorplates—then why not refer to them in the text? But these objections are mere trifles. I thoroughly recommend this book to every physician who treats patients with OA.

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