

## Book reviews

### *Traumatic brachial plexus injuries*

J Y Alnot and A Narakas (eds), 275 pages, Expansion Scientifique Française, Paris 1996  
ISBN 2-7046-1499-7

La Société Française de Chirurgie de la Main has now presented their 21st monograph in 30 years. The previous 20, which have covered different parts of hand surgery, have all been very well received and appreciated by hand surgeons in Europe as well as overseas. This number 21 is no exception.

Jean-Yves Alnot from Paris and Algimantas Narakas, active in Lausanne till he suddenly passed away shortly before the completion of this monograph, are both pioneers of brachial plexus surgery with over 20 years of clinical work in the field based on almost 1,000 patients. Together with 53 invited contributors of high reputation they share their wide experience in terms of detailed descriptions of the plexus anatomy, surgical techniques and well documented results of surgical repair of brachial plexus injuries. Thereby, this 40 chapter volume represents the current state of the art.

Presentations of common interest are given in the chapters dealing with anatomy and clinical examination. The anatomy of the brachial plexus is hard to present in a comprehensive way. Probably most doctors did not learn much about this complex structure during their preclinical studies in anatomy. The anatomy is well presented in the text and in informative schematic drawings, which should be of value to everyone interested in the topic. Certainly, many readers will find parts of the anatomical description too detailed, but these are addressed to the few people who are actively involved in surgical repair of brachial plexus injuries. In a separate chapter, the clinical ex-

amination is presented in such a way that it is recommended for study by all doctors who see polytraumatized patients in their daily work, as well as by doctors and therapists involved in later treatment and rehabilitation programs.

Of common interest is also the chapter "Anatomopathological lesions", in which the different types of plexus lesions are presented in 32 informative drawings.

The main part of the book, however, is addressed to the few superspecialists actively working in this field. A large number of different surgical techniques are presented in very clear and illustrative drawings. The results shown are, indeed, impressive, and this information is of common interest as we are now starting to know what can be achieved today in these severely injured cases, who used to be considered hopeless.

This book is a must for every surgeon who is active in the surgical repair of brachial plexus injuries. However, doctors and therapists in different specialties like orthopedic surgery, hand surgery, neurosurgery, neurology, neurophysiology, neuroradiology and rehabilitation medicine are strongly recommended to include this very informative presentation of brachial plexus injuries in their reference libraries.

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## Current practice in hand surgery

Saffar, Amadio and Foucher, 440 pages, Martin Dunitz Publishers, London 1997  
ISBN 1-85317-349-5

This new book in the field of hand surgery is very suitably entitled as it is not an ordinary textbook but rather a text concentrating on tricky things in hand surgery and how to solve them. Slightly more than 10 chapters ranging from anesthesia and trauma to congenital anomalies of the hand cover a large part of hand surgery but with the exception of congenital anomalies, each chapter tries to deal with some specific problems and focuses on these. This gives the hand surgeon—who I think is the target person for this book—an opportunity to develop new ideas and solutions on the subjects discussed. Not only do the authors try to concentrate on clinical issues but also on the scientific background and in that respect I think the chapters about nerves and tendons are of special interest.

As a hand surgeon I think the book fills a need for a book on some “finer points”. Most ordinary textbooks try to cover the entire clinical subject or to cover parts

of the clinical spectrum. This leaves a vacuum which very few books can fill, i.e., common “finer points” where one needs more help and an updated discussion.

Most chapters are didactic and easy to read, with references at the end of each chapter and short comments on each chapter by the editors.

Examples of some clinical problems that are discussed, and that most hand surgeons would consider to be difficult, are pulley reconstructions, the treatment of vascular anomalies and tenolysis in children. Not forgotten is a presentation of ectopic implantation of amputated parts—not an everyday problem but A PROBLEM in any case!

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## Clinical evaluation of medical devices

Karen Becker Witkin (ed), 271 pages, Humana Press, Totowa, New Jersey 1998  
ISBN 0-896-03446-1

It was with great expectations I opened this book on an important subject. The target audience seems to be people in the medical device industry and physicians working with the development of new products or research concerning medical devices, like orthopedic implants.

The first part gives a good survey of the general principles and various designs of clinical trials. However, large parts of the book deal with the regulations in North America, and these sections are probably more interesting to American readers and readers in the device industry than to the Scandinavian orthopedic surgeon.

There are several chapters on special fields, such as vascular surgery, heart and orthopedic surgery. One

chapter is on prospective multicenter clinical trials in orthopedics. This chapter is a valuable introduction to the subject, and it also surveys the history of orthopedic clinical research. The classification of orthopedic devices and requirements for FDA approvals are also clarified.

To an orthopedic surgeon, the most interesting part is the chapter on *Long-term evaluation of total hip arthroplasty* by Frederick J. Dorey. Here one can find descriptions of the main study designs and statistical methods for evaluating hip arthroplasty surgery, and examples from clinical studies are given. Reading this chapter should be of value for everybody involved in clinical studies and in orthopedic surgery and especially those in the field of arthroplasty, whether sur-

geons or manufacturers. The value and principles of survival analyses are well explained. Since most clinical studies in arthroplasty surgery nowadays are, or should be, conducted in cooperation with experts in medical statistics, multivariate analyses, like the Cox model, should perhaps have been given greater attention in this chapter.

The method of radiostereometry (RSA) is not mentioned. This is a drawback. The value of this method in evaluating joint prostheses is now well recognized in Scandinavia, and an introduction of it to the medical device industry worldwide would have been of great value.

The book should be interesting and important reading for anybody who works in or with the medical device industry, especially in the USA, to orthopedic surgeons in research or those who participate or plan to participate in developing new devices. Several sections are of great value as an introduction and a supplement.

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