

Book reviews

The spine: Master techniques in orthopaedic surgery

David S. Bradford (editor), 528 pages, Lippincott-Raven, Philadelphia, USA, 1997
ISBN 0-7817-0033-7

In the Lippincott Raven series "Master Techniques in Orthopaedic Surgery," a new title has emerged—The Spine, edited by David Bradford a very well known spinal surgeon.

The target group is considered to be fellows, residents, students and paramedical staff.

The aim is to present surgical techniques preferred by master surgeons in each subspecialty of this specialty. As mentioned in the preface, it is the intention not to discuss straight forward procedures.

The book is divided into surgical approaches and techniques, the former concerning only the anterior one, probably because it is used less often. The posterior approaches are mentioned as subheadings in different chapters.

The structure of this elegant book, however, is somewhat cumbersome. Thorough descriptions of advanced procedures, such as anterior and posterior cervical osteotomy, cervical laminoplasty, eggshell procedure and so forth are surprisingly intermingled with a chapter on lumbar discectomy which must be considered a straightforward procedure, whereas more demanding procedures, such as the operation for lumbar spinal stenosis, are not mentioned. In consequence of the personal presentations some important techniques are not described or not even mentioned, e.g., transarticular C₁₋₂ screw fixation for the treatment of atlanto-axial disorders. The chapter on thoracic discectomy, however, provides information on different ways to do this and the author emphasizes his preferred method. The techniques for correcting scoliosis of various origins appear in the section about various implant systems.

The quality of the illustrations varies greatly. The drawings are, in many cases, not satisfactory, but there are many photographs of high quality. The editing is not good—e.g., the chapter "anterior thoracic

fusion" contains a section on anterior lumbar procedures.

Each chapter includes indications/contra-indications, surgery, complications and recommended reading. These sections, except surgery, are very brief and do not give much new information. The reference lists are generally too brief. Therefore the book must be regarded simply as a complement, admittedly with excellent surgical descriptions, to other textbooks in this particular field.

Among the 30 contributors, all except two are practicing in the USA. The chapter on lumbar discectomy is written very much for the US surgeons. It includes a very extensive but accurate description of the indications for lumbar disc surgery, but it is less convincing regarding the technique, where a possible simple unilateral procedure is performed by detaching the musculature bilaterally also removing the supra- and interspinous ligaments. This is really not the current practice in Scandinavia in standard lumbar discectomy.

The chapter on transpedicular stabilization of the spine is written more or less as a chapter on the author's treatment of thoracolumbar fractures. The new computer-guided technique for improved screw placement is not mentioned.

To summarize, this book is very uneven, some parts are excellent but others are not, and the editing is unsatisfactory. The book can be recommended to experienced spinal surgeons. Many valuable tips are provided.

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Complex and revision problems in shoulder surgery

Jon J P Warner, Joseph P Iannotti, Christian Gerber (editors), 448 pages, Lippincott-Raven Publishers 1997
ISBN 0-397-51657-6

If you want a book on basic shoulder surgery, this is not a suitable one. However, as the title shows, this is a book for a shoulder surgeon who wishes to gain more knowledge. It focuses on many of the more difficult problems we meet in clinical practice. The book is the result of collaboration between 34 contributors, including 7 Europeans, all with vast experience and knowledge of shoulder problems. Although most of the authors are North American, the book is also very useful for a European shoulder surgeon.

Five main areas are dealt with: instability, stiffness, cuff tears, fractures and arthritis. Both frequent and rare problems of the shoulder are discussed. Of course, not all solutions are based on solid scientific data, but obviously always on clinical experience.

Each section of the book is introduced with a short overview by Jon J P Warner. These surveys are very well written and include diagnosis and treatment or how to avoid pitfalls. It is more of a personal introduction to difficult problems and is very thought-provoking. Some of the problems discussed are obviously iatrogenic and should hopefully never occur.

The text is accompanied by many drawings, radiographs and clinical photographs. Many arthroscopic and surgical photographs demonstrate various disorders and procedures. It is a pity that these photos are all in black and white.

In most chapters, the relevant literature is covered and cited.

If you want help with the problem of a hemiarthroplasty that is unstable anterosuperiorly or if you have a patient with anterior instability who has undergone surgery six times previously, this book will suggest several solutions.

For the shoulder surgeon who is familiar with the basic types of procedures and problems, this book may be of great interest because it is—to my knowledge—the most advanced work on shoulder surgery available.

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