Book review

Fractures and dislocations: principles of management

Paul J Gregg, Jack Stevens, Peter H Worlock (editors), 928 pages, Blackwell Science, Oxford, 1996
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This comprehensive volume is written by 48 authors (43 from U.K.) and deals with general principles of traumatology as well as injuries specific to each region. The authors' aim is to combine the traditional British conservative treatment with elements of more aggressive surgical treatment of skeletal injuries.

The first section covers one third of the text and includes topics such as basic biomechanics, fracture healing, systemic response to injury, early management of associated injuries, general principles in management of closed and open fractures, and immediate, early and late complications. The last two thirds of the text covers specific injuries in the upper extremity, the spine, the pelvis, and the lower extremity.

The quality of the different chapters is rather variable. The introductory chapters give an outline of the principles of traumatology and the pathophysiology of injuries. The chapters on systemic trauma response, resuscitation, and early management emphasize the role of orthopedic surgeons in the acute intervention. However, several modern aspects of trauma management are not described, such as the interdisciplinary approach according to ATLS (advanced trauma life support), the pulsoxymetry (rather than skin temperature), the hyperosmolar resuscitation, the coniotomy (rather than tracheotomy), the early respirator treatment, etc. The chapter on fat embolism is out-of-date, with mainly old references, while the chapter on ARDS (adult respiratory distress syndrome) is up-to-date in the discussion of etiologic mechanisms. Of course, as expected in a first edition, some errors are caused by the printer's gremlin—e.g., the absent Starling diagram (Figure 6.2).

Each of the 15 chapters on the specific injuries present surgical anatomy, classification, radiology, conservative and operative treatment. Some chapters are detailed, while others are more general. The classification and treatment of clavicular fractures and dislocations are excellent, but shoulder arthroscopy (diagnostic and surgical) is not described. Wrist and hand injuries, including carpal dislocations are well outlined, but again arthroscopy is not described Most aspects of spinal injuries are covered, but MRI is only mentioned and no figures illustrate the importance of MRI in modern diagnostics. Pelvic and acetabular fractures are excellently introduced. Knee ligament injuries are described (although not well illustrated), but some operative procedures seem obsolete, e.g., prosthetic ligaments and extraarticular procedures. The arthroscopy-assisted cruciate ligament reconstruction and the use of interference screws are not mentioned. Ankle fractures, talus and calcaneus fractures as well as many forefoot fractures and injuries are described—but not the pilon fracture of the distal tibia!

The broad introduction to the general principles of traumatology before the presentation and discussion of the specific injuries is commendable. Some chapters are excellent and educational for both the surgeon-in-training and the established specialist, while other chapters are out-of-date, with mainly old references.

Bengt Mjöberg
Department of Orthopedics, Uppsala University Hospital, S-751 85 Uppsala, Sweden