

Book reviews

Spinal stenosis

John E. Nixon (ed.), 401 pages, Edward Arnold, Hoder & Stoughton Publishers, 1991
ISBN 0-7131-4525-0

Increasing interest and knowledge of spinal stenosis has led to the release of two major books on the subject within one year. The editor—aided by 16, mainly English, contributors—of the present book titled *Spinal stenosis* is Mr. John E. Nixon, a consultant orthopedic surgeon at King's College in London.

The foreword to the book was written by Henk Verbiest, to whom the increasing interest on spinal stenosis today, to a large extent, must be ascribed. The book begins excellently with an introduction of historic aspects, a chapter on the the embryology of the lumbar spine, and a brilliant chapter on lumbar anatomy applied to the surgery of spinal stenosis. Even if this initial, extremely high quality is not entirely sustained throughout the book, I found it, just the same, to be a very complete and comprehensive volume. Of the 20 chapters, the editor has written nine of them, which are mainly concerned with classification, diagnostics, and treatment. The 20 chapters together represent, indeed, where our knowledge on spinal stenosis stands today. The only weak point in this context is the presentation of results of surgical treatment, which

emphasizes the problems of assessing results after surgery, which are described by the author himself in the chapter. Further, I found the chapters on facet joint and nerve root injections and on psychosocial aspects of low back pain somewhat indeterminate and not representing the current knowledge on these subjects. Each chapter is followed by a reference list, which means that the two classical papers by Verbiest from 1954 and 1955 are cited more than 10 times, which could have been avoided. These drawbacks, however, are of minor importance, for the book *in toto* is verily an extremely informative source of knowledge on spinal stenosis. Granted, it is impossible to read and peruse all the numerous recently published works on spinal disorders, but for orthopedic surgeons and neurosurgeons with a trenchant interest in the lumbar spine, *Spinal stenosis* is definitely a must.

Björn Strömqvist

Lund University Hospital Department of Orthopedics,
S-221 85 Lund, Sweden