

Orthopaedic surgery. The essentials. By M. E. Baratz, A. D. Watson and J. E. Imbriglia. Pp 192. New York, etc: Georg Thieme Verlag, 1999. ISBN: 3-13-116291-0. DM 248.00.

This ambitious and weighty tome seeks to provide a single-volume text to be used as a core reference for orthopaedic residents. The lay-out of the book is attractive and the chapters for the most part are organised in a logical fashion incorporating the relevant anatomy and physiology. There are highlighted 'Pitfalls and Pearls', drawing attention to important areas of text but varying in wisdom. 'Question-and-Answer' sections provide a moment of fun and revision at the end of each section.

There is a well-organised anatomical approach to fractures of the pelvis and a readable section on musculoskeletal imaging, but the comprehensive coverage of topics unfortunately gives insufficient detail for the higher surgical trainee. As suggested in the Foreword many medical students and other musculoskeletal practitioners will find this a valuable basic reference book. It contains much important information but it will not replace the need for detailed additional reading from currently available specialist texts. The final chapters on ethics, economics and politicolegal issues, which on first reading would seem not to be relevant to the UK, do give an insight as to the probable future trends in this country.

Clare Marx.

The interactive knee. CD-ROM. Edited by P. Aichroth, W. Dilworth Cannon, A. Amis, V. Mahadevan and J. Harris. London: Primal Pictures Ltd, 1999. £150.00.

The most notable fact about this CD-ROM is the sheer quality of its production. It has been written by recognised experts in the fields of anatomy, biomechanics and surgery of the knee. The information is beautifully presented and it is a pleasure to view. The manufacturers have done an excellent job. It takes very little time to learn how to use it and to interact with the 3-D model, rotating it to view it from each side. It is a triumph of simplicity and is ideal for the computer illiterate as a first attempt in using this medium.

The anatomy section is the easiest and the best to view. It begins with the superficial structures and then peels them away towards the centre of the knee. Each structure is seen from every angle giving a dynamic image of the muscles, ligaments and menisci. The result is a compilation of biomechanical research bringing to instant life the changing tension in the ligaments.

I found the section on surgery more difficult to use. All the information on techniques and equipment is there, but it is not comprehensive and many may find that their favoured procedure is not demonstrated. It is this area which differentiates the CD-ROM from a book and is the subject of the debate which is going on in all areas of teaching. The CD-ROM is a new concept in the presentation of information which we are only just beginning to recognise and appreciate. To assume that the CD-ROM will replace books in the foreseeable future is to miss

the point; it is easier to dip into a book. The reader is more in command with two or three books and some journals open at one time. The CD-ROM should be viewed as the first step in a huge new area of educational technique. *The interactive knee* will be invaluable for demonstrating an injury or a surgical procedure to trainees, physiotherapists or specialists in sports medicine, and of course to patients. A lap-top computer could replace the plastic model in the clinic and I thoroughly recommend this CD-ROM for this purpose. It is also a valuable source of material for presentations and lectures, a function which is recommended by the manufacturers. I will use it for all these reasons, but if I want to look up a particular condition or a surgical technique I will still use a textbook.

It is small wonder that this opus has won the BMA 'Book of the Year' Prize. Everyone should have one and should one's enthusiasm ever flag, these images will at once soothe and stimulate. It is an amazing achievement.

David Hunt.

Instructional course lectures. Volume 48. Edited by J. D. Zuckerman. Pp 744. Rosemont, Illinois: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, 1999. ISBN: 0-8923-212-2. £120.00.

Volume 48 presents 80 chapters covering the principal areas of controversy in current practice. The editors of these admirable volumes have a clear agenda. The authors are given the responsibility of covering a subject without the privilege of personal special pleading. They have the task of standing back from the subject and reviewing it for the generalist in orthopaedics rather than feeding the particular interest of the established expert. The selection of authors is at least as important as the choice of subjects; both have been made well here. The volume is dedicated to two of the foremost educationalists in American orthopaedics and the subjects covered in this volume reflect their areas of special study.

Inevitably, over the years of these publications, there will be repetition and contradiction, but that is as it should be. No worthwhile analysis of a continually changing and improving subject could pass without contention. If it were to do so the subject would be in its dying stages.

The various sections cover reconstruction of the hip and the knee, arthritis of the ankle, the shoulder and the elbow, cervical myelopathy and trauma to the thoracolumbar spine, myelomeningocele and orthopaedic oncology. The section on sports medicine is appropriately brief. We remain curious that this title means arthroscopy of the knee in North America, while a substantial review of tennis elbow and its treatment in relation to athletic performance is found under the heading of elbow conditions not sports medicine. For those desperately in need of somewhere new to stick their arthroscope, the first metatarsophalangeal joint is suggested, with a final stipulation that the technique should be reserved for those with experience of it. This seems like the classic situation immortalised by Joseph Heller.

Volume 48 is a worthy follower of its predecessors. The set will never be complete.

Michael Laurence.