

Surgery of the injured hand towards functional restoration

R. Venkataswami

Pp. 581. New Delhi, Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishing, 2006.
ISBN: 978-81-8448-471-7. £148.99

This is a book that was commissioned and published in India. The editor, himself an internationally respected hand surgeon has assembled 48 chapters from over 40 contributors. His stated objective is to cover the topic of hand injuries emphasising the restoration of function from those surgeons with great experience in the front line of managing such injuries. He has recruited the talents of those authors who have been a significant part of his professional life for whom he clearly has great respect, even affection. This book certainly meets his objective.

Starting with a brief history of hand surgery from Kleinert who also wrote the foreword, it goes on to describe the anatomy and dynamics of the hand and fingers. Major injury to both soft tissue and skeleton, brachial plexus and the carpus are covered together with substantial sections dealing with revascularisation, replantation and digital transfers.

The contributors are from orthopaedic and plastic units throughout the globe and represent a 'who's who' of internationally acclaimed hand surgeons. An extraordinary breadth of material is covered and the volume comes with two invaluable DVD's relating to flaps and brachial plexus surgery.

For those of us who practice hand surgery in the safe environment of the United Kingdom, this book will be a revelation. Contributions from the Indian surgeons are inspirational, full of sound common sense in the management of appalling injuries seldom seen in the West. The results described are near-miraculous. Particularly edifying is a chapter from Venkataswami himself on the creation of an 80-bed hand unit which started from a small space in a corridor in the Stanley Medical College Hospital in Chennai. Most other chapters are well-referenced and informative. Also noteworthy is the coverage of flexor tendon surgery, nerve repair, composite reconstruction and microsurgical reconstruction of the thumb amongst many other excellent chapters.

This book will appeal to the trainee thinking of a career in Hand Surgery and may well guide the choice of an upper limb fellowship.

There are criticisms and it is obvious that many authors are not writing in their first language. Proof reading is poor. There are many misprints, spelling and punctuation errors which will no doubt be addressed in future editions. Although these are minor irritations they do not diminish the merit of the text. The illustrations are of a variable quality and some photographs are inadequate to elucidate the text.

The wisdom and breadth of this book is extraordinary, nevertheless, and allowed a single choice of a manual on hand injuries it would be hard to find one more suitable.

D. S. Nairn

Spine disorders: medical and surgical management

J. D. Bartleson and H. Gordon Deen

Pp. 292. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.
ISBN: 978-0521-88941-4. £65.00

This is a very refreshing book written to give an overview of the various disorders that afflict our patients with an up-to-date evaluation of modern treatment options and their likely outcomes. It is co-authored by a neurologist and neurosurgeon to give a balanced viewpoint.

The book is well written with good annotated illustrations. It starts with an explanation of basic anatomy and takes the reader through the ageing process and degenerative change. There is a good section on pain perception and causation. The three areas of the spine, cervical, thoracic and lumbar are dealt with in terms of pathology, investigations and treatment options. There are good explanations of common operative procedures with some excellent illustrations.

The novel features of this book include sections on the referral of patients for surgery and the persistence of symptoms following surgery. This is difficult ground and well covered. I especially enjoyed the 'clinical pearls' in the lumbar spine chapter. In order to show this book is abreast with contemporary thought, there is a chapter on minimally invasive surgery, disc replacement and the new technologies of dynamic stabilisation and computer-assisted intra-operative guidance. The various techniques for fusion in the lumbar spine are discussed but without reference to the TLIF