



Book reviews

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Arthroplasty of the hand and wrist

By I. A. Trail

Pp. 136. 136. Cleckheaton: Amadeus Press, 2010. ISBN: N/A. £49.99.

With the inexorable widening of the range of implants and materials facing the surgeon today, this book is a timely contribution in the field of hand surgery. It is a single-author monograph which not only encapsulates the experience of the author, but also draws upon the collective wisdom of the Upper Limb Unit at Wrightington Hospital. It covers the science and surgery of replacement of five joints: the DRUJ, the MCPJ, the PIPJ, the CMCJ of the thumb and the wrist. Ian Trail is an internationally recognised figure in the field of joint replacement of the upper limb in both design and evaluation. This book is a testament to his scholarship and meticulous research.

Each of the five chapters in this short book covers a single joint and adheres to the same format, namely Background, Surgical Anatomy, Biomechanics, Surgical Technique and Rehabilitation, Evaluation, Results, Complications, the author's personal view, and ending with one or two interesting cases. The format is therefore predictable and helpful to the reader who might wish to skip some sections and focus upon others. Each joint is covered in meticulous detail from inception to possible failure and rescue or salvage. Earlier designs are mentioned and the reasons for their failure are outlined with reference to relevant publications. The author refers to the gradual decline of the use of silastic and the rise of more rigid materials which are more anatomical and therefore technically more challenging to insert. In the chapter on the MCP joint he does pay tribute to the enormous role that silastic has played, and still does, in the armamentarium of the hand surgeon. This important chapter covers an extensive review of published literature and evaluation tools currently in use.

I found his personal view for each joint to be a fair and balanced summary of the current situation; the case reports at the end of each chapter are instructive as well as reassuring that things can go wrong even in such a centre of excellence. Every chapter is well referenced with an impressive bibliography, but curiously the book comes without an index. While the content of this book is uniformly informative, the writing style is repetitive, as though the proof-reading stage had been omitted. There are many spelling and typographical errors throughout, tending to distract the reader. Hopefully these will be addressed in the next edition. The black and white illustrations and colour photographs are of a generally good standard throughout, with the exception of those in the chapter on the thumb, which are insufficiently clear to add anything to the text.

The author has aimed this book at the experienced surgeon rather than the trainee and I would agree that this is the correct target readership; its modest price nevertheless makes it affordable for all grades of surgeon who will find valuable lessons within its pages.

D. S. Nairn

Modern trends in THA bearings: material and clinical performance

Edited by J. P. Cobb

Pp. 253. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2010. ISBN: 978-3-642-13988-8. £58.99.

The title of this new book led me to expect a critical review of the clinical and technical performance of the new 'hard bearings', now fashionable for total hip arthroplasty. This has certainly been provided here for metal-on-metal, metal-on-polyethylene and ceramic-on-ceramic articulations in a series of more than 30 separate papers contributed by experienced hip surgeons from around the world. What is less obvious is a linking theme between them to help the reader find a pathway to a logical conclusion through the mass of clinical and technical data.

I therefore turned to the Editor's Preface for guidance. Professor Cobb has provided an overview as a decision-making aid for the orthopaedic surgeon faced with an ever-widening range of bearing couples and materials from which to choose. In addition he provides the data to assist in decision-making by managers, health economists and interested patients; although I doubt that many would have the necessary background knowledge or inclination to read it.

The individual contributions are well-chosen and very well-matched in their presentation and referencing, with good illustrations reproduced to the customary high standards of the publishing house. What is less helpful is the somewhat idiosyncratic grouping of the topics. It begins appropriately with general considerations; identifying the anatomical and pathological variations, and the lessons learned to date with the combinations of materials used to treat them. Having focused on the need for bearings with lower rates of wear, I had expected a sequence of papers for each material reporting the tribological and clinical results to date. That information is available, but interspersed with unrelated contributions on the imaging of failed hips, wear testing of intervertebral disc prostheses and the early clinical results of ceramic knee prostheses.

There is a wealth of information available for the selective reader and a larger number of contributions deals with all aspects of the ceramic-on-ceramic hip replacement, including the causes of the 'squeaking hip'. Despite this worrying complication for patients, ceramics emerge on balance as the bearing couple of choice. The book will certainly appeal to the more scientifically orientated hip surgeon, but is not one for the average trainee to read from cover to cover.

D. L. Hamblen