BOOK REVIEWS


This book is published in French, but proved to be of interest and value to a surgeon with limited ability in this language: one who was able to read a menu, drive across France without too many problems, and discuss orthopaedics late at night after three Pernods.

The book is based on work by the Groupe International des Études des Approches Intervertebrales du Rachis (GIR) and is edited by three previous presidents. Multiauthors is now accepted and often valuable, but the use of 69 authors must cause difficulties. The topics addressed include biomechanical anatomy and the aetiology and treatment of conditions with the most controversial pathology.

Does instability exist; can we define it; can it be treated? The chapters vary in value and viewpoint. Some provide only the results of personal series of one form of treatment; others look at the problem in depth, reviewing methods that are available and the literature which is relevant. Unfortunately, much of the text is repetitious – the great disadvantage of multiauthors without severe editing. The text is clear and the illustrations are of good quality, but colour would have improved the anatomy section.

I enjoyed this book; it was refreshing to compare the French approach with the current opinions expressed in the English literature. The chapters on operative approaches were interesting and stimulating, showing up the diverse methods used to deal with what may be a single problem. It was not difficult to read this book, but there is no doubt that a glass of Burgundy helped comprehension. – T. R. Morley.


This is a heavy book in every way. The list of authors reads like a ‘Who’s who’ of North American shoulder surgeons. Bigliani, Brems, Caspari, Cofield, Craig, Ellman, Hawkins, Neviaser, Morrison, Post, Rockwood, Tibone, Warren, Zarins and Zuckerman have each written a chapter. The book is published on high-quality paper, illustrated lavishly in full colour.

The general sections are: the rotator cuff, instability, trauma, reconstruction and arthroscopy. Each part includes chapters on various aspects and in each chapter the author details his own operative techniques.

My disappointment is that little is provided of the reasons for the choice of these techniques or routes. There are many ways to skin a cat or even a shoulder and many of the authors have devised and developed the particular operation which they describe. Shoulder surgery is such a young and vigorous specialty that if the authors had swapped chapters many of the steps in each operation would be different. The book tells you how but not why. It is like a culinary work by a master chef who tells you how to cook the meat but not the secret of his recipe for the sauce.

Some surgeons have been schooled to be exact, if not obsessive, and this makes for irritation when the authors refer to the anterior circumflex humeral artery as “several blood vessels . . . at the lower edge of subscapularis”, and the deltoid artery as “a troublesome bleeder in the superior aspect of the wound”.

These are minor quibbles since the superlative team collected by Dr Craig has given us a book which is at the forefront of those on surgical techniques at the shoulder. Most of the operations in the shoulder surgeon’s repertoire, from an acromioplasty to release of the supraspinal nerve, from a capsular shift to a revision shoulder arthroplasty, are described in a didactic, logical and well-illustrated manner. If you need such information, this is the book for you. – T. D. Bunker.


The preface of this book does not clearly state its purpose and the other chapters give no clear idea of the target audience. It certainly provides an overview of techniques that are currently available. There are 11 chapters on arthroscopic techniques for various joints, and then almost as an afterthought a chapter on minimally invasive surgery.

Most orthopaedic surgeons have a special interest in one particular joint or limb, and there can be very few who flit from joint to joint as ‘arthroscopists’. There are already numerous whole books on individual joints and regions – this book attempts to cover the techniques for all in 200 pages.

The choice of chapter size is curious. There are 15 pages on arthroscopically-assisted reconstruction of the posterior cruciate ligament. This is a very difficult technique of uncertain value which should be left to the specialist knee repairer. In contrast, the whole of shoulder arthroscopy is dismissed in 20 pages.

The book seems to fall between two stools, providing too little for a surgeon who wishes to develop a technique and too much detail for those who want a general overview. The statement by Kenneth DeHaven in the foreword that this is “a landmark contribution to orthopaedic literature” must be regarded as somewhat hyperbolic. – S. R. Bollen.


It seems that classical skeletal anatomy may be obliged to give way to MRI; radiologists have taken over much of cardiology, neurology and urology. This fine little book relates these scans to line drawings of bones and joints, and although it aims to be a reference for the image interpreter rather than the surgeon, it will help understanding and the necessary co-operation. – M. Laurence.