

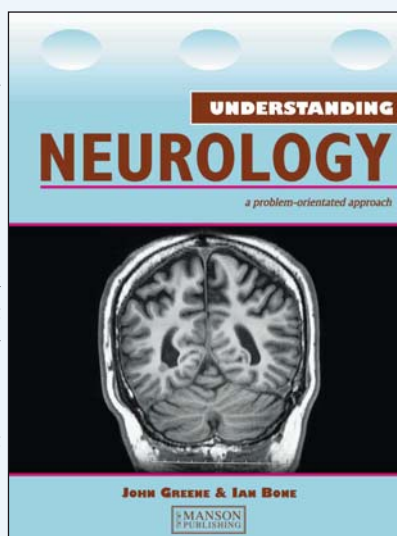
### Understanding Neurology: a problem-orientated approach

John Greene and Ian Bone  
Manson Publishing 2006  
Price £24.95. Pp 240  
ISBN 1840760613

The purpose of this neurology textbook is to take a problem-orientated approach to understanding neurology. Traditional textbooks are organized by disease process. This one guides the student through a clinical problem from the standpoint of a patient complaining of, say, 'dizziness' or 'poor coordination'. As an aid to understanding, it succeeds admirably. For students with little experience in neurology, the text is clear and there are plenty of tables, diagrams and pictures to simplify complex concepts. The chapters are self-contained and need not be read in order.

What about the problem-orientated approach? Is a chapter entitled 'poor coordination' really going to be different to a traditional one on 'ataxia' or even 'the cerebellum'?

To assess this, I took the textbook for a test drive to enliven my neurology ward round. This proved very useful in identifying what the book can and cannot do. It is not the best aid to diagnosis, so if you are studying a patient presenting with a 'motility problem' or a 'speech and language disorder' it may not help you decide whether this



is stroke or a brain tumour. Equally, if you have a patient with multiple sclerosis it does not provide a quick reference on their condition. However, if you encounter a problem like dysphasia, it will help you to understand and distinguish the different types. It also explains ataxia well.

Therefore, the great strength of this book is its ability to explain underlying principles of

clinical neurology and it does that extremely well.

*AC Pereira, St George's Hospital, London*

### Cardiothoracic Surgery (Oxford Specialist Handbook)

Joanna Chikwe, Emma Beddow,  
Brian Glenville  
Oxford University Press 2006  
Price £39.50. Pp 793  
ISBN 0198565881

Cardiothoracic surgery encompasses the fields of adult cardiac surgery, thoracic surgery and congenital heart surgery. To attempt to distil these specialties into one pocket-sized handbook is certainly a challenge.

The intended audience for this book is 'doctors embarking on their first job in cardiothoracic surgery' and it 'is not intended to be a comprehensive text'. However, in this small specialty it will have to jostle for position with a number of other review texts.

Oxford Specialist Handbooks have a tried and trusted format. The text is easy to read and the diagrams are numerous and often excellent.

Those chapters devoted to cardiac surgery are comprehensive and are often of the standard required to pass the exit exam. A section on cardiac intensive care is edged in red for easy reference. There are practical guides such as 'the patient with poor gases' and 'management of low cardiac output', while the section on renal failure is both remarkable and refreshing for a cardiac text (are the authors closet nephrologists?). Most aspects of cardiac

surgery are covered. More pharmacology and a section on blood conservation strategies are obvious inclusions for future editions.

In stark contrast sit a handful of chapters on thoracic surgery, seemingly tacked on to the end. There is no distinction made in the chapter headings between diseases of the lung, pleura, mediastinum or chest wall. Furthermore, the chapters are too concise with virtually no detail on the practical aspects of surgery.

I feel the authors have missed a trick here. As a handbook of cardiac surgery this book is excellent and should prove valuable to all cardiac surgical trainees. As a handbook of cardiothoracic surgery it is let down by the weak sections on thoracic surgery.

*Tim Batchelor, St James's University Hospital, Leeds*

### Clinical Anatomy: Applied anatomy for students and junior doctors (11th edn)

Harold Ellis  
Blackwell Science 2006  
Price £32.99. Pp 439  
ISBN 1405138041

My time as an anatomy examiner has passed and the knowledge seeps away. I accepted the task of reviewing this book to supplement what remained in the hippocampus, and also out of curiosity because I had never read this bestseller.

It is easy to understand the success of *Clinical Anatomy*: the text is clear and succinct and the illustrations are good, although here and there I found myself wishing for more of them. As befits a surgeon, Harold Ellis is particularly strong on the clinical relevance of anatomy, including surface markings. In addition, there are several flashes of wit to enliven the pages, for example his comment on student's elbow.

The author wisely retains some of the older nomenclature (e.g. circumflex nerve) alongside its modern replacement. Certain mnemonics are given, but other racier ones are wisely omitted. Perhaps the least successful section is the one that deals with the brain, but the structural and functional anatomy of this organ are so complex that it is difficult to do them justice in a concise textbook of this nature.

Having sampled nearly every section, I now understand why this book has retained its popularity through eleven editions, and the updated amendments ensure that the text is as evergreen as its author. Professor Ellis has the happy knack of distilling the important facts into a limited number of words without in any way sacrificing readability. The book is subtitled 'applied anatomy for students and junior doctors', but this old doctor has found it invaluable.

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