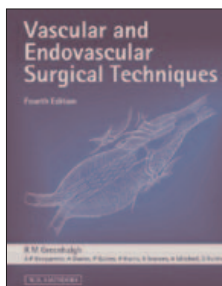


Vascular and Endovascular Surgical Techniques (4th edn)

RM Greenhalgh
WB Saunders 2001
Price £99.95. Pp 548
ISBN 0 7020 2643 3

I was pleased to see a new edition of this classic book of operative vascular surgery with international contributions. The authors present personal views, which is a strength (tried and tested methods) but also a weakness (some outdated or eccentric practices).

The book is mainly illustrated with half-tone drawings. About one fifth is devoted to endovascular abdominal aortic aneurysm repair, including the main techniques. This is fast evolving and the principles are well explained for future developments. Carotid angioplasty is well covered, including devices for preventing embolism. Management of graft infection is a wholly conventional approach but the sometimes useful technique of graft irrigation has been omitted.



The chapter on femoropopliteal bypass was disappointing. Too many legacy techniques are advocated, e.g. preoperative antibiotics and tunnelling the graft, and the importance of estimating graft length and avoiding twisting is not mentioned. The chapter should be revised and expanded to cover in-situ bypass. In contrast, the chapter on rescuing the failing graft is valuable.

The substantial sections on vascular trauma and lower limb venous diseases are welcome.

However, there are important omissions from varicose vein surgery: the approach to the sapheno-femoral junction is unhelpful and foramen ovale closure is omitted, as is on-table angiography for the difficult saphenopopliteal junction.

The lack of an index makes finding topics tiresome but this is a comprehensive 'workshop manual' of vascular surgery which is coherently edited and well presented. I recommend it for vascular trainees and as a bench book for vascular departments.

CRG Quick, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Cambridgeshire

The Desktop Guide to Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Edited by E Ernst
Mosby 2001
Price £24.95. Pp 444
ISBN 0 7234 3207 4

This book aims to provide a concise reference to evidence-based information on complementary and alternative medicine. This is ambitious given the immaturity and diversity of many complementary disciplines. However, Ernst and colleagues have synthesized available data from systematic reviews and clinical trials to present the evidence.

The book's six sections cover how to use the book, diagnostic methods, therapies, herbal and non-herbal medicine, conditions, and general topics. The layout allows quick and easy reference and the text is supported by tables that summarize the weight and direction of evidence, and indicate safety concerns. The authors are extremely cautious, almost alarmist, about the safety of therapies, requiring the reader to consider how they define 'safety'.



Exercise for example is classed as having 'serious safety concerns' because 'sudden death has been recorded'.

Complementary therapists may feel that the book does not represent the holistic nature of therapies and adopts a reductionist approach that fails to reflect how such therapies are delivered. For example traditional Chinese acupuncture may include other interventions in contrast to 'trigger point acupuncture'.

For the clinician this book provides an excellent guide to the complementary therapies that may be useful adjuncts to patient care and for the researcher it highlights therapies where further research is required.

Janet Richardson, University of Westminster, London

Oncology

Edited by RAJ Spence, PG Johnston
Oxford University Press 2001
Price £22.95. Pp 536
ISBN 0192629824

Cancer afflicts one in four of the population and may manifest itself in any organ so all medical students, regardless of their intended career destination, should be well informed about the disease. This textbook has been aimed primarily at them and they would find it a splendid

education tool. It would be equally useful for clinicians who are not oncologists or non-medically qualified practitioners who have contact with cancer patients.

The book, including its good index, has 536 pages. It is in two parts: the first describes the general principles of cancer and the second individually describes common cancers of children and adults. It is appealing to the eye with its wide margins, which accommodate pictures, graphs and key points. Colour is well used in headings and tables and there are many colour photographs of clinical presentations, pathology specimens and histopathology sections. There are also lots of quality medical images and line drawings, which aid understanding. The short case histories at the end of chapters also work very well.

Of the 30 contributors, 22 are from Belfast, and several others have an Irish association, but there is not a parochial flavour to the texts. Their medical students encouraged its writing, and on this evidence, the students are in good hands. However, this fine book will more likely be purchased by graduate non-oncologists wanting an informative, user-friendly text.

John Toy, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, London