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Fifteen years of clinical experience with hydroxyapatite coatings in joint arthroplasty

Edited by J-A. Epinette, M. T. Thomas

Pp.452. France: Springer-Verlag, 2004. ISBN:2-28700-508-0. £77.00.

The use of calcium hydroxyapatite with its bio-compatibility and ability to actively bond to osteoid, was initially pioneered by dental practitioners. When it became possible to produce scintered coating of this material on a metal substrate by using the process of plasma spraying, the feasibility of its use to anchor implants in orthopaedic surgery became apparent. In the early 1980's studies were undertaken to assess the level of fixation achieved in animal studies with encouraging results. Austen and Furlong in 1983 produced a femoral component coated with hydroxyapatite for use in replacement arthroplasty of the hip. Improvements in the application of the coating of hydroxyapatite showed the feasibility of this option and use of such components gradually spread. Now, a number of papers have been published with follow-up of ten to fifteen years showing that the fixation remained solid with no evidence of membrane formation or osteolysis.

The use of such coating has been widened to include knee replacements, screws for external fixation, pedicle screws and similar devices. The consistent finding has been that the coating dramatically improves the reliability of such implants.

However, it is suggested that only 7% of hip replacements use hydroxyapatite coatings, and clearly suspicions remains as to their reliability.

This book describes the experience of orthopaedic surgeons in Europe, particularly, but also in Australia, the USA and Japan. There are detailed accounts of the experimental use of hydroxyapatite with a comprehensive analysis of the histological and bio-mechanical findings. There are detailed personal accounts of the results obtained in primary arthroplasty of the hip and the knee,

with sections devoted to the use of this material in revision arthroplasty of the hip.

It may be suggested that such a volume simply records the experiences of enthusiasts for the use of hydroxyapatite, but the overall breadth of the book is such that it should be read by all orthopaedic surgeons, particularly those involved with joint replacement. The results recorded are outstanding and the description of the patho-physiology involved is well written and easily understood.

Although this is a multi-authored book, the overall style is pleasing and flows well. It is a good read. The editors deserve congratulations for producing this excellent volume.

F. Horan

Who's who in orthopaedics

Edited by S. P. Mostofi.

Pp. 389. New York: Springer-Verlag, 2004. ISBN: 1-85233-786-9. \$169.00.

We are all the products of our own history and background. Orthopaedics, in particular, has historically been a developing specialty which took a long time to become disassociated from general surgery. The gradual assumption of our own identity has owed a great deal to figures of influence and drive who guided the development of the specialty. Eponyms are still commonly used in orthopaedic surgery and through them the names of the great surgeons of the past are well known to most of us.

Mr Mostofi has produced a true labour of love in which he has brought together the obituaries of the pioneers of our world, previously published in the major journals. By its very nature, the book is at times a little uneven; obituaries are subject to the whims of the editor and the space available for publication.

It is fascinating to read about the giants of the past, have their achievements brought before us and to gain an insight into their idiosyncrasies. This book contains photographs and biographies of more than 250 great names. It is an important work of reference, which should be on the shelves of every orthopaedic surgeon who shares an interest in the history of our art.

F. Horan