Book reviews

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The evidence for orthopaedic surgery

Edited by D. Limb and S. M. Hay

Pp. 304. Shrewsbury: tfm Publishing 2006 ISBN: 1-903378-36-2. £50.00.

I approached this book with curiosity, followed by scepticism and finally conviction, that this is a most important subject and the editors' contribution very instructive. On the face of it, the book has a somewhat tabloid cartoon on its jacket and the title itself is slightly ambiguous. Few will be against Orthopaedic Surgery *per se*. The editors are at pains to present the evidence from which scepticism might flow, while obviously giving support for subjects surmounting the test of time. In the absence of an all-powerful and just judge of medical matters, this book performs an invaluable service in displaying most of the reliable scientific studies bearing on each subject. Those who seek the Holy Grail, will find no dogma here, which I suppose is the object of the exercise.

A broad but by no means comprehensive, list of subjects is covered, from theatre infection to gait analysis, through several common fractures, joint replacements and conditions of the spine, knee and shoulder. As a result, the approach to each subject must vary, giving an unevenness to the book. The writers of each chapter have been wisely chosen, and at the end of each is a comprehensive list of references, but at the beginning of the book, the reader might be better prepared for the task of critical reading if there were a basic essay on scientific philosophy by, for example, a follower of Popper.

Vigilance and scepticism go hand in hand, but there is a danger of inspiring scepticism of this book too. Occasional authors have fallen for the tempting opportunity to use the glossy pages to display their own bias. One last concern whether there is a place in text-book form for a subject the essence of which is change. In this book the reader will find support for his clinical worries over 'high tech' procedures, and ample justification for a conservative mode of management of many conditions. Reliable outcome measurements alter more with the dimension of time than with improvements in hardware or instruments.

Perhaps the subject is too important for a book; it requires the publication of a Journal in which the material will be peer-reviewed and regularly updated and expanded. This noble attempt should be the first of a large series to cover the field.

M. Laurence

Orthopaedic surgery essentials: sports medicine

Edited by A. A. Schepsis and B. D. Busconi

Pp 511. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2006. ISBN: 0-7817-5653-7. \$99.00.

This is one of a series of eight books on a variety of orthopaedic subspecialties. It is intended as a basic primer for health care pro-

fessionals, including medical students, junior orthopaedic surgeons and sports medicine trainees. I enjoyed reading this book. I was reminded that, in the USA, Sports Medicine is a hugely popular orthopaedic specialty.

The volume is divided into five sections: Special Issues, Medical Issues, Upper Extremity, Lower Extremity, and Rehabilitation. The chapters are arranged in a uniform format from pathogenesis through to diagnosis and finishing with management. Key references are listed at the end of each chapter. There are ample figures, important tables on key information and excellent algorithms that describe the decision-making process as it relates to the management of a given condition. However, I could not understand why the sections on the upper limb (Section III) and on the lower limb (Section IV) have a different approach to anatomy and biomechanics and to physical examination. The former covers these topics in the first two chapters. The latter incorporates this information in the first few pages of each chapter.

The approach to problems is typically North American, where all the contributors originate. It is evident that some concepts, matured in Europe, have not yet penetrated to the USA. For example, the final end point in the patellofemoral pain algorithm is quoted as surgery, but it should be made clear that, in Europe, this would be offered only to a very small proportion of patients.

In my own specialist area of tendon problems, I was disappointed to see that the terms 'tendinitis' and 'tendinosis' still prevail in spite of the fact that, given the absence of the classical signs of inflammation, the recommended terminology has been the rather less specific 'tendinopathy' for nearly a decade. Many of the suggested references (practically all from North America) were published before 2000, which is surprising for such a vibrant subspecialty.

This is a clear, basic read for neophytes in Orthopaedic Sports Medicine. I look forward to future editions, but I am not sure that the contents of this book, as they stand, are applicable to the British and European markets.

N. Maffulli

Imaging of soft tissue tumors (second edition)

Edited by M. J. Kransdorf and M. D. Murphey

Pp 588. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2006, ISBN: 0-7817-4771-6. \$199.00.

When a surgeon sits down to review a book that is primarily aimed at radiologists, it has to be a remarkable volume that will retain his interest throughout and be praised unreservedly at its conclusion.

This book is the result of a monumental effort to classify and describe more than 30 000 soft-tissue tumours seen in the Depart-

ment of Soft Tissue Pathology of the US Armed Forces Institute of Pathology over a 10-year period. These are documented in detail in Chapter 2 with their prevalence by age, sex and anatomical location. This follows a preliminary chapter on the origin and classification of soft-tissue tumours which introduces the WHO classification before giving a brief account of the immunohistochemical and genetic markers used in diagnosis. Chapter 3 is modestly titled "Imaging of Soft Tissue Tumours"; essentially it covers the whole process of tumour staging. There then follow chapters on the imaging of the various types of soft-tissue tumour and tumour-like lesions and a final chapter on compartmental anatomy.

So far, so good, but it gets better. In each section, the key concepts are abstracted and boxed. Consequently, within the main body of the text there is, in effect, a second book which comprises short notes on the first. This considerably enhances its value as a reference book by making the relevant information rapidly accessible. Indeed, I can barely remember the last time I read a medical book which was so clearly written and so devoid of waffle.

Inevitably, a book on imaging stands or falls on the quality of its images. While there are a few illustrations which fall below a desirable standard, these are usually examples of the rarer conditions where the authors will only have had access to one or two cases. In a work of this breadth, this is not only inevitable but eminently forgivable. Otherwise, the figures are clear and well annotated. The work, as a whole, is well-referenced, well-indexed and well-produced.

I enjoyed this book immensely. In their preface, the authors declare their intent to "provide a systematic approach to the radiologic evaluation and diagnosis of soft tissue tumors and tumor-like masses." Not only have they achieved this, but they have done so with rigour and clarity. Any surgeon with an interest in soft-tissue tumours should have a copy of this book in his personal library next to Enzinger and Weiss which it complements perfectly. Others, without any interest in soft-tissue tumours, could read it with benefit as a model of how to communicate a large amount of detailed information with style, brevity and pellucid clarity.

Alistair Ross