

## Book Reviews

**Wound Care.** By William A. Cocke Jr, Raleigh R. White IV, Dennis J. Lynch and Charles N. Verheyden. Pp. xi + 120 with 58 figures. (New York, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne: Churchill Livingstone, 1986). Price £21. ISBN 0 443 08427 0.

Four professors of plastic surgery at the Texas A. and M. University College of Medicine have combined to produce this guide to wound care, with seven chapters entitled "Principles", "The Common Pathway", "Common Wounds", "Wound Care", "Burn Wounds", "Bites" and "Difficult Wounds".

The first two deal with the pathophysiology of the wound, written for the clinician, and consider the factors which inhibit wound healing. They discuss primary, delayed primary and secondary closure.

Subsequent chapters make use of case reports to illustrate methods of managing different types of wound and on which to hang discussion. The approach is a practical one. A section on gravitational ulcer describes treatment with the Unna-paste boot in two-and-a-half pages plus three pages of illustrations, but mentions only briefly skin grafting. Emphasis is placed on debridement and dressings.

The chapter on the burn wound provides practical advice on the management of flash burns and on electrical burns, recommending the fitting of an obturator appliance for children's mouth burns. For burns to the hand, early grafting is advocated in order to prevent thick scarring. Topical antibiotics are promoted, a practice not generally employed this side of the Atlantic.

While dog and cat bites may be seen in the UK, snake, spider and stringray bites must be rare. The management of human bites is described, with cautionary advice on the outcome of bites on the hand.

The photographs are on the whole of satisfactory quality, though a few lack definition. They complement the textural account of the case reports.

As the preface stresses, the book does not describe anything that is new but emphasises proven principles of basic wound care, stressing simplicity. It provides, in general, a sound introduction to the trainee surgeon and should be read by surgeons of whatever specialty since the principles it promulgates apply to all types of healing tissue. It is perhaps of particular relevance to Accident Department surgeons and registrars dealing with primary care of wounds.

J. V. H. KEMBLE

**Anthropometric Facial Proportions in Medicine.** By Leslie G. Farkas and Ian R. Munro. Pp. xxiv + 344, with 166 tables and illustrations. (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1987). Price \$65.75.

This book presents a large volume of data on facial proportions and their variations with age, sex and race. The data are expressed as indices which relate pairs of measurements, and there are lists of indices for most conceivable facial proportions. Apart from the two authors, eight others have contributed. The first half of the book consists of a number of chapters discussing

the indices and their variations, including sections on proportions in above and below average (looking) women's faces and on disproportion in psychiatric syndromes. The last 184 pages are given over to tables of proportional indices.

The book is not easy reading and it is not until one has spent some time with it, and learned to use it by trying to look up answers to a few specific questions, that one can even begin to feel comfortable with it. Much of the data appears initially to have little, if any, practical use to surgeons treating facial deformity—the majority of plastic surgeons are going to aim to correct a deformity (within the limitations of surgery) towards a "normal" which, while a few simple angles and distances are aimed at, is to a large extent subjective. One of Farkas's and Munro's aims with this book is to offer objective guidelines to those planning treatment of facial deformity so that good proportions are the aim and a better balance the result. There are sections on clinical use of this kind of information which go some way towards giving these guidelines, but the specific indices presented in the rest of the book are not actually used much in those sections.

Whether many surgeons would find this book adds to their current planning routines I doubt, but the baseline data are all there and will certainly be of benefit in studying alterations in facial form caused by surgery, growth, etc. Then, in the future when more is known of the quantitative effects of surgery on soft tissues and bone at various times during growth, this kind of data may be more helpful in surgical planning.

M. D. POOLE

**Evaluation and Installation of Surgical Laser Systems.** By D. B. Apfelberg. Pp. xii + 324 with 103 figures. (New York, Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1987). Price DM 168. ISBN 0 387 96385 5.

This book is a multi-author text which has emerged from the Paolo Alto Medical Foundation, California, with contributions from other laser centres in the United States. Its Editor, Dr David Apfelberg, is well known for his work on the use of argon and CO<sub>2</sub> lasers for cutaneous lesions. The layout and printing are excellent. The illustrations, all black and white, are of moderate quality. The book is well indexed and each chapter has its own up-to-date bibliography.

I found the first five chapters interesting. These deal with laser biophysics and safety. Also covered are topics relating to the implementation and management of laser programmes, with comments on financial and legal matters. Despite some repetition and padding, this section is quite informative and provides good advice.

The largest section of the book (8 chapters) is devoted to "past, present and future usage of lasers" in more than ten specialties. The chapter on Lasers in General Surgery is well written; its theme is the use of CO<sub>2</sub> or Nd:YAG lasers in coagulation and excision of vascular masses and tumours. I had hoped to find the chapter on Lasers in Plastic Surgery to be stimulating but I was somewhat disappointed. There are only two paragraphs on the management of port wine stains and the chapter lacks critical examination of the very important current debate on the relative merits of CO<sub>2</sub>, argon and dye lasers in the treatment of this condition. Anyone who reads through the specialty chapters would find it difficult to agree with the Editor that "this volume is intended to be a one-step, complete information source for the novice as well as the experienced