

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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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 CO₂, 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

laser user". Certainly, there are available a number of books which treat the specialty usage of the laser in a manner more helpful to the experienced laser user.

The book is concluded by a comprehensive and useful list of 33 appendices ranging from "practical tips for laser purchasing" to "lasers and the law" where possible scenarios for law suits are described.

It is tempting to compare this book with a not dissimilar British publication (*Medical Lasers: Current and Clinical Practice* by Carruth and McKenzie, published by Adam Hilger Ltd., 1986). It would be realised that laser users form such a heterogeneous group that it is quite difficult to meet adequately their differing requirements in a single publication.

In conclusion, this is a useful book to read before purchasing or installing a laser machine but it is felt that a plastic surgeon would not find it very helpful in the clinical situation.

A. A. QUABA

Head and Hands, an Era in Plastic Surgery. By Sir Benjamin K. Rank. Pp. x+292. (London: Gower Medical Publishing, 1987). Price £25.

Sir Benjamin's autobiography is a "damned good read". My wife enjoyed it as much as did I. It includes many black and white photographs. Starting with his arrival in London two years after his qualification in 1937, when the "Big Four" dominated plastic surgery in the UK and the Empire, he refers to medical practice arrangements there which "provided good reasons for the great upheaval that was soon to come to the British National Health Service" (page 6). He was trained by Rainsford Mowlem, mainly. From London he went to the Western Desert with the 2nd Australian General Hospital.

For most readers the early chapters are "history" with an informed commentary. The book is written to appeal both to plastic surgeons and to the lay public, and it contains many clinical records of dramatic cases presented in a colloquial style. Some are perhaps longer than their clinical content warrants. During the latter part of World War II Sir Benjamin had 100 beds for plastic surgery in Melbourne. The biography contains value judgements on many of the great of plastic and reconstructive surgery—fully acceptable from a man of Sir Benjamin's stature. His revelations about the demise of the Nuffield chair of plastic surgery are doubly interesting at a time when there is the possibility of a new chair in the UK.

After establishing the specialty in Australia, Sir Benjamin travelled widely, with greater ease than would have been possible for a UK NHS consultant. He gives the explanation on page 102: "Working in partnership or as a group not only provided an all day, every day availability and service to patients—it had two other advantages. It permitted easier escape from the scene—more frequent overseas visits to keep pace with developments elsewhere or to promote diffusion of teaching and practice through our own, as well as in neighbouring countries. It also allowed me to take a more active part in general hospital and professional affairs—an erstwhile obligation now, unfortunately, often sidestepped—this brought me into contact with some good leaders". America (1947), Singapore and Malaya (1953–54), India (1955, 1960 et al), Canada as Commonwealth Professor (1958) were influenced by his teaching and in his accounts are vignettes of political and medical personalities as well as elements of travelogue. Pakistan gets a bad press.

Because he played the key role in introducing the specialty into Australia, and the vital additional role of gaining for it there academic recognition, considerable space is devoted to the medical politics involved—but perhaps not too much when read with Australian eyes. The story ranges through the International Congress in Melbourne and the meeting in Holland in the year of his BAPS Presidency in 1965—the Leiden Meeting was the first I attended as a newly appointed consultant.

Along with his initial welcoming of the NHS in Britain and his later regret of its appalling bureaucratic machinery, Australia is not spared: "The whole package emanating from State intrusion has promoted the worst in professional people, right from the time of graduation when they now face wages board determinations—industrial relations hassle, hours on duty, overtime rates and such matters as never previously would have been thought of. Public attitudes, led by the media, bear witness to an all-time low in the esteem of the medical profession and to widespread dissatisfaction with one newfound 'system' after another, despite soaring costs to the taxpayer" (page 226). The hospital locker correspondence of page 238 could be duplicated in many an NHS consultant's files—it is too familiar to be funny! Interestingly, Sir Benjamin's last chapter is about a recent visit to Britain to see old colleagues and relatives—the UK is his plastic surgical Alma Mater.

A. F. WALLACE

Principilization of Plastic Surgery. By D. Ralph Millard, Jr. Pp. xxiii+685, illustrated. (Boston, Toronto: Little Brown & Co., 1986). Price £135. ISBN 0316 57153 9.

In 1957 Sir Harold Gillies and the young Ralph Millard published their classic work *The Principles and Art of Plastic Surgery* in which they set out 16 principles. One always suspected that, while the substance of this book belonged to the Master—Gillies, the style of writing and production owed much to the junior author. These suspicions were confirmed by the three volumes of *Cleft Craft*, and this new book by Dr Millard is clearly out of the same stable. Its title will doubtless raise a few eyebrows but the obvious title was already used for that other book 30 years ago and Dr Millard has merely applied his Principle 26—"Imagination sparks Innovation". For this book details 33 principles, mastery of which will give the plastic surgeon the weapons to overcome any clinical problem; indeed, many are of much wider application and indicate a philosophy of life.

Over the years the original 16 principles have been revised and their number expanded. Each one has a chapter to itself, grouped into sections. There are Preparational, Executorial, Innovational, Contributinal and Inspirational principles. Each is illustrated by cases and anecdotes. The author's friends—eminent colleagues and ex-trainees—were asked to contribute cases that illustrated what they felt to be important plastic surgery principles, and many are included while other examples are drawn from outside the field of medicine. At heart, however, this is the summation of Dr Millard's own experience and thinking over a long career. He reviews almost every one of the many contributions he has made to Plastic Surgery, deriving lessons from each. Many of the cases have therefore been published before and there is considerable overlap and repetition but the author defends himself stoutly on this charge, quoting