



Book Reviews

Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. Edited by Ira D. Papel and Nathan E. Nachlas. (St Louis, Mosby Year Book, 1992). ISBN 0-8016-3696-5. Pp xviii + 574, 1337 ills. Price £87.

The alleged aim of this text is to provide a comprehensive core reference text book for facial, plastic and reconstructive problems, thereby providing an "essential background" for further research. The book is organised in six parts: Principles (115 pages); Aesthetic Facial Surgery (153 pages); Functional and Aesthetic Surgery of the Nose (89 pages); Reconstructive Surgery of Face and Neck (85 pages); Facial Trauma (61 pages) and Congenital Deformities of the Face (45 pages).

The majority of the 80 contributors are otolaryngologists, with occasional dermatologic surgeons. It is immediately apparent that there is an uneven style with clinical photographs varying from good to inadequate. The line illustrations are inconsistent, with some being amateurish in the extreme. Many illustrations have obviously come from lecture slides and several do not relate directly to the text.

The book starts with good sections on skin and healing but these are followed by a poor chapter on soft tissue techniques, and an even less helpful chapter on grafts and flaps. Chapter 5 on scar revision is of interest, but the chapters on keloid scars and tissue expansion do not provide a balanced view. Chapters on synthetic implants and lasers are then followed by sections on "Aesthetic Facial Proportions" and "Computer Imaging".

Part two is devoted to Aesthetic Facial Surgery, where hair replacement surgery sits between collagen injections and chin augmentation, leading to orthognathic surgery, which devotes two full pages to the use of dental composite resins. As is usual throughout the book, few pre and post operative photographs are comparable.

Part three is a competent and even excellent exposition of nasal surgery, with some chapters taking great care over pre and post operative photographs. However, there are still illustrations of uneven quality and the text has the annoying habit of not matching the illustration in detail.

The reconstructive cancer section comprising part four begins with a chapter typical of that in dermatological surgical texts, with the usual exposition of Mohs' technique familiar to plastic surgeons. There is an eight page chapter running through a few myocutaneous flaps, and a subsequent chapter on scalp reconstruction fails to mention free flaps. There is a reasonable chapter on lip reconstruction but this reviewer found little else of note.

Part five deals with facial trauma and consists of a reasonable general exposition of management. The audience for which the book is intended can enjoy the rather obvious statement "successful management of mandibular fractures represents a continuing challenge to the otolaryngologist".

The final part on congenital deformities of the face is extraordinary in its attempted scope. Every topic appears in the 45 pages, half of which are devoted to ear deformities. A final eleven page chapter on cleft lip and palate is a very one-author biased account of a complex subject which fails to inject the necessary balance.

Indeed, it is the lack of balance which is so striking throughout the whole text book. In spite of its good value price, attractive binding and easily read print, this reviewer could not recommend it to a wide audience.

M. J. EARLEY

Differential Diagnosis in Dermatology. By Richard Ashton and Barbara Leppard. (Oxford, Radcliffe Medical Press Ltd, 1992). 2nd edition. ISBN 1-870905-474. Pp viii + 300, 111. Price £65.00

This is the second edition of a book which has been written to help doctors confronted with a patient with an unknown rash. The book uses algorithms complemented by descriptive text and colour photographs to provide a guide to diagnosis. Management is not discussed.

The book looks attractive and is well set out. The pictures are of very high quality and there are a number of informative line drawings illustrating the histopathological features of lesions. Some of the algorithms are successful but there are drawbacks to using this system. Diseases have to be put in artificial groups, the differential diagnoses must be over-simplified and as the same disease may feature in several places in the book, it is difficult to link all the features together to provide a unified view of the disease. Drs Ashton and Leppard have included a number of rather rare conditions in the algorithms, but perhaps some of these could have been omitted so that the tables were simplified.

Some of the statements in the text seem rather sweeping: it seems a little unfair to put stress, hectic lifestyle and guilt at the top of any list of possible causes of urticaria. There are inconsistencies in the text: the surface of solar keratoses are stated to be "always rough" but solar keratoses feature in the algorithm on chronic conditions with a "normal surface". Prof R MacKie's 7 point check list is provided to help with the diagnosis of malignant melanoma (table 5.1) but Prof MacKie has modified this list and the table should be amended in future editions. It is a pity that pruritus is still mis-spelt throughout this edition of the book, just as it was in the first edition.

The limp edition is reasonably priced and may be enjoyed by GPs and medical students who like using algorithms. The book also has appeal as an atlas of dermatology. The price of the hardback edition may deter individual purchasers.

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