



Book Reviews

Microvascular Surgery and Free Tissue Transfer. Edited by David S. Soutar. (London, Melbourne, Auckland, Edward Arnold, 1993). Pp xvi + 268, ill. ISBN 0-340-54925-4. Price £85.

David Soutar is to be congratulated on getting a world class team of authors to contribute to this book, which is intended to provide an overview of the subject and to help practising microsurgeons in the choice of which particular flap to use.

The book is presented in a "user-friendly" style which I enjoyed thumbing through and also specifically reading chapters that clinically interested me. The presentation of the book is excellent and the line diagrams and photographs in general are of a very high quality.

The most striking feature is the excellent editing, which has produced a uniform style with little overlap between one contributor and another. The meat of the book is to present a reconstructive problem, outline the principles of management, list the choices of flaps and the author then plumps for his preferred flap with a full description. This was particularly informative in such difficult reconstructive problems as facial paralysis, treatment of bone defects in the lower limb and defects in the upper limb and hand. Added to this there are also excellent chapters on complications and their management, such as anticoagulation.

The book itself competes with similar North American and Australian books but I think that the format does give it an advantage, and overall this book will find its niche with those taking the Specialist Fellowship Exam of either the United Kingdom or the European variety, and can be very strongly recommended to candidates and probably most of the examiners as well. Priced at £85 I would recommend that all departmental libraries get a copy of this book.

D. M. DAVIES

1993 Yearbook of Plastic, Reconstructive, and Aesthetic Surgery. Edited by Stephen H. Miller. St Louis, Mosby Year Book Inc, 1993. Pp xiii + 412, ill. ISBN 0-8151-6040-2. Price £52.00.

I now seem to visit the medical library less frequently, and found this volume a ready way to scan topics that I would otherwise remain in ignorance of. There are some 313 abstracts from 68 journals and cover the whole range of the speciality. With 23 abstracts from the British Journal of Plastic Surgery, our journal appears adequately represented.

There has been considerable selection, and the Statement of Purpose indicates that the abstractors in the whole Year Book series scan 250 000 articles annually to select only 5% for detailed analysis (in 43 volumes).

In a previous review of the 1991 and 1992 volumes a colleague had reservations about the usefulness of this type of presentation, and felt that it was no substitute for regular review of the core plastic surgery journals. I would recognise that within such a diverse speciality, it is now impossible to be familiar with the current literature across so many journals. Even in these days of computerised literature searches (and how incomplete they can be), this volume is helpful in drawing attention to missed papers, particularly in non plastic surgery publications.

As a result of reviewing this, I now know that whilst only 6% of lymph nodes in patients with malignant melanoma have histological evidence of metastases, 48% of such nodes will yield tumour on cell culture (*Archives of Surgery* 1991; 126: 1455).

This is a book to be consulted in the library rather than to own. It is well presented and bound, and not expensive.

It will be an aid to literature searches which are constrained by the available 'key words'.

Trainers and trainees should find it helpful—even if its reading highlights only one useful article otherwise overlooked.

R. W. GRIFFITHS

The Hand. Volume IV. Edited by Raoul Tubiana. (Philadelphia, London, Toronto, WB Saunders Company, 1993). Pp xl + 922, ill. ISBN 0-7216-8910-8. Price £224.

This book was intended as the last in the monumental series *The Hand*, whose first volumes appeared in 1981, and which represent the magnum opus of Raoul Tubiana, the doyen of French hand surgery. Whilst the uninitiated will ask how four volumes (each stretching to about a thousand pages) can be written about such a small area as the hand, Professor Tubiana tells us that there is yet another volume to come that will contain topics such as arthritis, Dupuytren's and congenital problems.

Volume IV is concerned exclusively with neurologic disorders and brings material from electrophysiologists, neurologists and many other disciplines. Famous names from the English speaking world of hand surgery are in abundance, but a strength of the book is that more than half of the 60 authors are from continental Europe, and we are introduced to some attitudes previously poorly disseminated in Britain and North America.

Much of the first half of this book is concerned with paralysis of the upper limb, and includes detailed chapters on tendon transfers and rehabilitation. There then follow a series of chapters dealing with peripheral nerve compression, and these include some important and valuable contributions on thoracic outlet compression (a condition possibly underdiagnosed in Britain) and even a chapter confusingly entitled "the etiology of idiopathic carpal tunnel syndrome". The next two sections deal with tetraplegia and with brachial plexus. This latter area was extensively covered in volume III and many of the contributors appear again here. The main focus in this volume, however, is the obstetrical plexus and this is well covered. Claude le Quang contributes a useful chapter on post-irradiation injury of the plexus and its surgical treatment that complements the same contribution from Brunelli in volume III (both lending weight to the benefits of early surgical treatment in this condition).

After a single chapter from Paul Brand on the hand in leprosy, there follow sections dealing with spasticity, pain and dystonias.

The text is presented in glossy format, well referenced and generally the contributions are interesting and worthwhile. I found the layout fussy, and sometimes the text and illustrations are divorced. Much of the material is monographic in nature rather than didactic, an unusual finding in such a format, and this gives the volume a rather patchy character, and leads to some crossover with earlier volumes. Less specialist hand surgeons may find the rather academic focus of this text too narrow for their needs and the price tag of £224 will discourage many. What cannot be denied is that it is a landmark reference, and for the surgeon undertaking upper limb nerve work or treating paralyses of the upper limb it is a must.

S. KAY

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