The Physician's BOOKSHELF

TREATMENT OF FRACTURES—Supplementary Volume to the 5th English Edition—By Prof. Dr. Lorenz Bohler, Director of the Accident Hospital, Vienna XX; Professor of Traumatology, University of Vienna; and Prof. Dr. Jorg Bohler, Director of the Accident Hospital, Linz; Professor of Traumatology, University of Vienna. Translated from the first German Edition by Alfred Wallner, M.D., Kalispell, Montana. Grune & Stratton, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1966, 403 pages, $23.75.

Any new publication by the doctors Bohler must be received with great interest by any serious student of traumatology. The immense volume of material with which the two men are in direct personal control lends to their words tremendous authority when they speak on the subject of the treatment of fractures. The present volume, the supplementary volume to the 5th English Edition of the Treatment of Fractures, is such a work. Unfortunately it suffers from the discontinuity of any supplementary type volume which sends the reader back again and again to the original volume to see just what has been deleted and what added.

In the general section of the volume, dealing with principles of bone healing, the importance of avoidance of distraction of the fracture fragments is stressed. It is the opinion of the authors that too much traction is the most common cause of delayed and/or non-union. In addition to pseud-artrosis and delayed union the authors ascribe Sudeck's dystrophy as being caused by excessive traction. Another cause of Sudeck's atrophy is thought to be physical therapy. Following the general section of approximately 50 pages there comes a new section on head injuries written by Joerg Bohler which gives an excellent description of the mechanism of the injuries, the clinical findings and the differential diagnosis of the various types of intracranial trauma. Treatment and post-operative care and post injury evaluation is also given in great detail.

Another special section deals with closed intramedullary nailing of tibial fractures. This technique, utilizing biplanar image amplifier fluoroscopy, serves to show how much further advanced is the instrumentation in Austria than in most major centers in this country. The remainder of the book describes the techniques of treating various injuries of the upper extremity as well as dislocations of the hip. For the beginning student the check list which is given at the end of each section, outlining the various steps which must be taken, will be very helpful. The admonition that the plaster cast must be split to the very last thread is given in each section to insure against circulatory disturbances, and is an admonition to which attention is justly given.

The volume is an excellent addition to the lore of orthopedic surgery, and should be included in the library of every serious orthopedist, along with the 5th English Edition to which the present volume is a supplement.


Dr. Ehrenwald has written a very scholarly text on the complex subject of psychotherapy. The title of the book was a bit misleading to me, as it brought to mind immediately the more polemical book, "Myth and Mental Illness" by Dr. Thomas Szasz. There is no similarity between the books, despite the common word in the title. This book follows the history of psychotherapy starting with the early myths of treatment in ancient times and it continues to explore the force of myths in modern day therapeutic approaches. The author examines in historical sequence the continuum of primitive magical healing to current psychoanalytic, behavioral and existential treatment approaches. He applies the elements of this historical schema to the analysis of each current treatment approach in a fruitful way. The polarities of myth and cold rationality in each system are always clearly explicated, and in fact, it is this service to the reader that is to my mind the most important contribution of the book.

The form of the book is quite an enigma; its strengths are also weaknesses. The comprehensiveness of the book is astounding and the author is obviously well-informed and suited to write such a book. Yet each therapeutic system is so succinctly included and fits so smoothly into the developing thesis that one can't help but feel that only those elements of the system that fit are emphasized. Where obvious discordant material appears, it is minimized. When case material is presented, the explanatory statements within the case narrative are so eclectic (from existential shift to corrective emotional experience to interpersonal expectations to cultural value systems to psychoanalytic id psychology) that conceptual jumps are confusing. Although on the surface the conceptual jumps are quite acceptable, further reflection shows that not enough data is available to apprehend meaningfully the conceptual evaluation.

These same considerations which are obviously thought above to be weaknesses are also the strengths of the book, which is subtitled, "An Integrative Approach." The case narratives present data and concepts which bridge the multiple therapeutic networks now taught in most training centers. The comprehensiveness lends a feeling of logical completeness to a usually boundaryless subject.

The book is well worth reading for physicians who are already familiar in depth with various psychiatric theories. I think the book would be misleadingly simple to a novice in the field, unless he were constantly aware that counter arguments to the main thesis are not strongly presented. This is not the book to judge the dissimilarities of various theories of therapy, but Dr. Ehrenwald certainly presents the similarities in a cogent and comprehensive manner.

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