The nature of a text that tries hard to give a brief overview of all the different clinical facets of cancer care means that some themes will be underdeveloped. The chapter on investigating metastasis from an unknown primary appears overly negative in the ability to help such patients surgically and, therefore, shies away from full investigation on value-for-cost basis. As the availability of radiological investigations improves and their costs concurrently decrease, clinicians are finding increasing success in coming to a working diagnosis, thereby helping the planning of palliative treatment including surgery. It would also have improved the text to see more focus and probably a complete chapter on the outcome of different combinations of intervention, which is an area of particular current research interest.

Altogether, this text is a useful, well-written, referenced and edited overview of the basic tenets of spinal oncology practice. Its size and layout make it very easy to read and it can be recommended to any health professional forming part of an oncology team. It will also help to keep the improvements in spinal surgery and its outcome in the mind of all clinicians caring for patients with cancer. This, hopefully, will help to ensure that patients are not excluded from full assessment and potential treatments that are now thought significantly to improve the quality of limited life.

Leg Ulcers: Diagnosis and Management (3rd edn)

DAVID NEGUS, PHILIP COLERIDGE SMITH, JOHN BERGAN

EXTENT P/H	354 p, hardback
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REVIEWER	Madu Onwudike
STAR RATING	***

The title, *Leg Ulcers: Diagnosis and Management*, gives the impression that this text book has been restricted to the subject of leg ulcers. However, one soon discovers that it is

a comprehensive text book of lower limb venous diseases.

Leg ulcers, particularly those of venous aetiology, constitute a major health problem in most Western countries. A significant proportion of the venous leg ulcer patients are relatively young, resulting in economic losses not only from the cost of treatment but also from the wastage of productive man-hours. As highlighted in the text book, the principal health personnel who manage venous leg ulcers vary between countries. In the UK, for example, the majority are initially seen and managed by nurses in community leg ulcer centres. This, notwithstanding the high profile given to venous diseases in general and leg ulcers in particular by the editors, is highly commendable since for most vascular units venous disease would contribute to at least 30% of their workload.

A detailed examination of normal anatomy and physiology of lower limb veins and a thorough discussion of pathology, pathological anatomy, pathophysiology, epidemiology and clinical presentation of all aspects of lower limb venous diseases have been systematically reviewed. Venous leg ulcers have been didactically presented with the specialist in mind. Extensive discussion of conventional and the more controversial views on pathophysiology have been appropriately discussed in a balanced format without the authors' personal bias influencing the quality of materials presented.

The basis for the accepted methods of investigation and treatment of venous leg ulcers, including compression, therapy and surgery are well presented. Unproven methods of treatment like pharmacotherapy, topical treatment and more modern methods including foam sclerotherapy, echosclerotherapy and endovenous laser treatment have also been adequately covered. There is also a very good chapter on 'The Differential Diagnosis of Leg Ulcers'. The text is illustrated using excellent line diagrams, black-and-white as well as colour photographs. Each chapter has been very well researched with a comprehensive list of references.

Perhaps my only criticisms of the text book are the several instances of repetition and a few typographical errors. On the whole, however, it is a good specialist text book of lower limb venous diseases which any vascular surgeon with a special interest in this field would find quite useful.