BOOK REVIEWS

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Interactive Cardiac Surgery

PAVEL ZACEK, JAN DOMINIK, PAVEL KUBIS

EXTENT P/H	DVD
PRICE/ISBN	£54.00 3540238255
PUBLISHER	Springer (Berlin), 2005
REVIEWER	Colin Hilton
STAR RATING	**

This DVD is an interactive textbook of cardiac surgery in that navigating through the book is, like all textbooks, at the whim of and under the control of the reader. It has been produced in the Czech Republic and I think it has been translated from a Czech text. The language is somewhat stilted and some of the terms used seem to be direct translations from the Czech and, as such, read awkwardly. Some of the words do not exist in the English language.

It is unclear at whom it is aimed. The written text is brief and limited in its scope. There are links from the text to more detailed sections on the major aspects of cardiac surgery but even these are superficial and would not be useful to cardiac surgical trainees beyond the first year or two of their training. It may, however, be useful as a review for trainees, nurses and students who wish to gain a superficial knowledge of the subject prior to more advanced training.

The format of the DVD is an index page from which specific topics can be accessed. Topics are cross-referenced so that, for instance, while reviewing valve disease, pictures of the pathological appearance of the valve can be accessed along with basic physiology, anatomy and surgical details. The graphics and text are clear and easy to read. Indeed, the graphics and illustrations on the DVD are its greatest strength. Unfortunately, even there it has weaknesses. The labelling of diagrams is generally satisfactory but the video clips of echocardiograms and angiograms and most of the X-rays have no direct labels. There are descriptions but I feel these often need some prior knowledge before the viewer could identify the features described. Although sound could usefully have been added, the only use of this is the sound of a heartbeat over the main titles.

The text on each topic is divided into several sections, such as diagnosis, operations and results. This includes links to a history of the topic – a simple list of notable developments without graphics – which is by no means comprehensive. There could have been much more done with this section, especially as there are no references related to this information. Within the texts, certain words are underlined as if to provide either emphasis or a link to further information. Often they provide neither.

While there are links in the text to other related subjects, there are no links to the list of references provided from the front page. Indeed, the references are a great disappointment as they are all references to textbooks, the most recent

of which is already 5 years' old. There is no mention, for instance, of international guidelines on valve replacement which would have provided considerable information in the section on why and when to replace the aortic valve.

The operative pictures are generally excellent although the descriptions of the techniques are limited. They are insufficient to act as a guide for the trainee faced with a surgical patient.

Results of surgical procedures are dealt with very briefly if at all and, again, have no references to the seminal literature. There is no reference, for instance, in the chapter on heart transplantation to the International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation database from which some of the information must have come.

Histology is another area where the content falls short of what I would expect from a textbook. Under cardiac tumours, there are no pictures of the histology of myxoma which by the authors' own statement accounts for 75% of cardiac tumours. There are no slides of pericarditis but epicarditis – very rare, as the authors admit – is represented.

I was disappointed in this DVD. I believe it could have been a very useful tool for trainees, particularly its visual aspects. While these are well done, it is seriously let down by the superficial nature of the information provided. The lack of references to the literature is also very disappointing as it cannot be used as a basis for further research into a topic. I do hope, however, that the authors will produce a second edition to address some of these points as I think such projects could have a very useful educational role.

ABC of Alcohol (4th edn)

ALEX PATON, ROBIN TOUQUET

EXTENT P/H	72 p, paperback
PRICE/ISBN	£18.95 0727918141
PUBLISHER	Blackwell (Oxford), 2005
REVIEWER	Kieran Moriarty
STAR RATING	*****

This classic is a tribute to the long-standing dedication of physician Alex Paton. He introduces co-editor, Professor Robin Touquet, who has pioneered the treatment of alcohol misuse in Accident & Emergency at St Mary's Hospital in London.

Expert contributors ensure a true multidisciplinary approach. Although essentially a primer to alcohol, the book's length has virtually doubled to 57 pages. Interestingly, while the previous front cover shows a young male drinking, this fourth edition silhouettes what could be either a young man or a woman. Their wine glass clearly exceeds one unit, reflecting concern about binge drinking in young adults.