BOOK REVIEWS

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Neurosurgery: Principles and Practice

ANNE MOORE, DAVID NEWELL

EXTENT P/H	687 p, hardback
PRICE/ISBN	£99.00 185233522X
PUBLISHER	Springer (Berlin), 2005
REVIEWER	Richard Cowie
STAR RATING	****

This new book should be on every neurosurgical trainee's desk. A group of acknowledged experts from the UK and the US have been selected by the editors to contribute chapters that cover their respective topics in a practical, yet innovative, way. Their aim to present an up-to-date synopsis, for residents and registrars in training and recent graduates of training programmes, has been very successful.

The chapters are arranged in broad topics, which begin with investigations of the neurosurgical patient, followed by a section on peri-operative care including anaesthesia and intensive care. The next section deals with areas where recent technical developments have occurred: neuro-endoscopy, image-guided surgery and stereotactic radiosurgery. Subsequently, a group of chapters are devoted to the management of intracranial tumours including low- and high-grade gliomas, sella and parasella lesions, meningiomas, intraventricular and pineal region tumours together with those involving the cerebellar pontine angle. A section on skull-based tumours not dealt with elsewhere is followed by a chapter on the management of cerebral metastases and primary cerebral lymphoma.

The vascular section begins with a review of the physiology of cerebral blood flow and techniques employed for pre- and peri-operative assessment. An excellent chapter on the management of patients by interventional neuroradiology is quite properly sandwiched between those dealing with aneurysmal subarachnoid haemorrhage and arterial venous malformations, given the importance of this technique to the management of patients with such conditions. Somewhat illogically, the chapter on ischaemic stroke and carotid endarterectomy is at the very back of the book rather than being included in this section.

It is refreshing to see a chapter on the rehabilitation of neurologically injured patients alongside those dealing with severe head and spinal injuries. In the past, this area has been neglected but the importance of multidisciplinary teams of rehabilitation specialists to the management of postoperative patients is obvious to all who work in a neuroscience department.

Hydrocephalus is dealt with separately from the section on paediatric neurosurgery, which comprises chapters on the management of sporadic and syndromic craniosynostosis, spinal dysraphism and paediatric neuro-oncology.

Subsequent sections deal with the spine, peripheral and cranial nerve injury, functional neurosurgery and infection. I was surprised to find that degenerative disease of the lumbar and thoracic spine is not included, given the large number of patients who present to all neurosurgical units and the recent controversies in surgical management by instrumented fusion or disc replacement.

Despite these criticisms, this is an excellent new book, full of applied basic neuroscience and practical clinical advice yet unafraid to confront difficulties in the management of neurosurgical pathology. It bridges the gap between journal articles and reviews on the one hand and multi-volume texts on the other. It can be recommended for all those beginning a neurosurgical career but there is also much in it which will refresh the knowledge of established surgeons, particularly when subspecialisation has meant that they have become less familiar with some areas of neurosurgical practice. I consider this to be an excellent book that will have broad appeal across neurosurgery.

Resource Management in Health and Social Care: Essential Checklists

WILLIAM BRYANS

EXTENT P/H	147 p, paperback
PRICE/ISBN	£21.95 1857756274
PUBLISHER	Radcliffe (Oxford), 2005
REVIEWER	David Fillingham
STAR RATING	***

It was Oscar Wilde who warned against 'men who know the price of everything but the value of nothing'. Although he wasn't referring to healthcare economists, he easily might have been! Fortunately, in his recent book, William Bryans has shown himself to be adept at applying economic concepts in a way that makes clear their reliance upon values of equity and quality. As such, his book is an interesting and useful primer in management issues which will be of particular interest to clinicians becoming more heavily involved in the field.

Bryans' book is wide ranging in its attempt to apply economic and management concepts to everyday NHS life. The topics covered range from the macro-funding of the NHS to detailed advice on budget management at the departmental level. The book's stated aim is to have 'an emphasis on the practical and what to do next' and it strives hard to live up to this laudable goal. Some aspects seem a little out of date despite being so recently published. For example, it talks about long trolley waits, which are almost a thing of the past in the majority of accident and emergency departments.