The book covers common orthopaedic conditions encountered in orthopaedic practice, not only in this country but in less developed areas of the world and this broadens its appeal. The layout of previous editions is maintained, with three main sections on general orthopaedics, regional orthopaedics, and fractures and joint injuries. The text has been updated to include modern operative techniques but has kept a general overview of disease, thus maintaining its relevance for a wider paramedical audience. With books on specialist subjects becoming ever more onerous, it is a pleasure to have a book that is easy to read, concise and clear, thereby aiding knowledge retention.

Apley said that a good picture with a story is worth a thousand words and the illustrations here have been modernised with liberal use of colour where appropriate. Those of us who are established in orthopaedics and are familiar with the book will eagerly open a new edition to see what extra information is contained within and which old friends have been retained to jog the memory or stimulate an anecdote.

However, *Apley's Concise System of Orthopaedics and Fractures* is primarily for the young, enquiring mind and would be particularly useful in the revision situation. If you are preparing for the MRCS examination, I can think of no good reason why this book should not be on your shelf. In fact, if more candidates were familiar with Apley's famous advice ('Look, feel, move, X-ray'), the life of the examiner would be a great deal easier!

Ultrasonic Energy for Cutting, Coagulation and Dissection

WOLFGANG FEIL

EXTENT P/H	228 p, hardback
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REVIEWER	John Lowry
STAR RATING	****

Under Professor Wolfgang Feil of the Evangelical Hospital in Vienna, the editors from Belgium, Germany, Finland and Sweden have drawn together 40 contributors largely from the surgical specialties and gynaecology in Europe and the US.

The preface reminds the reader of the basic fact that surgical technique fundamentally comprises cutting and haemostasis. Ancient civilisations used sharp instruments made of stone and later metal, while the scalpel and scissors of the modern operating theatre are merely the result of refinements of the basic principles. Again, going back to ancient times, haemostasis was often accomplished with compresses of plant material while surgical wounds, for

example amputations after battle injuries, were controlled by tourniquets and subsequently cauterised by red-hot iron.

While the basic principles of haemostasis by ligation and cauterisation are still valid today, the methods have progressively advanced, for example by the use of clips and rows of staples for ligation and high-frequency electrical power, focused at the tip of an active electrode for the latter. However, the risk of damage to tissues by heat and electrical current have been particularly evident in laparoscopic surgery and ultrasound as an alternative source of energy for surgical cutting and haemostasis has been progressively introduced.

The 35 chapters focus on the UltraCision system, which uses ultrasonic energy for haemostatic cutting and coagulation of soft tissues. After an introduction to the system, comprising generator, handpiece with ultrasonic transducer, blades and shears, the principles of ultrasonic energy for coagulation are described. These are then compared and contrasted with more conventional high-frequency coagulation and cutting in monopolar and bipolar form, emphasising the 'tissue-friendly' characteristics of ultrasonic energy as demonstrated by infrared thermography.

The next chapter on education, training and the personal experience over nine years by the lead editor suggests that laparotomy is the 'perfect procedure' to make first contact with ultrasonic cutting and coagulation. The reader is then guided in greater detail through a wide range of surgical procedures, each of which is considered in a uniform format with indication and pre-operative management, the operation itself, hints and pitfalls, personal experience and discussion. The procedures described include oesophageal resection, reflux surgery, oesophageal myotomy, radical gastrectomy, laparoscopically assisted and open colorectal surgery, laparoscopic surgery for cancer, laparoscopic cholecystectomy, hepatic resection, laparoscopic splenectomy, pancreatic resection, laparoscopic adrenalectomy and minimally invasive thyroid surgery. In addition, gynaecological procedures such as hysterectomy, laparoscopic myomectomy and resection of deep infiltrating endometriosis are covered before the field is widened yet further into breast surgery, tonsillectomy, orthopaedic and thoracic surgery, and urology, including a description of radical laparoscopic prostatectomy.

Typically for a book from the Thieme stable, it is concise, well produced and beautifully illustrated with line diagrams and colour photographs. It certainly fulfils the editors' stated aim of being a step-by-step guide for practising surgeons and those in training. It is interesting to note their views on the back cover that ultrasonic energy for cutting and coagulation is 'one of the most versatile tools that surgeons can have in their arsenal' and that 'the future of surgery lies in the use and mastery of techniques such as this'. Time and wider experience will, of course, tell but there is no doubt that their enthusiasm is potentially infectious.