BOOK REVIEWS

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The New Aird's Companion in Surgical Studies (3rd edn)

KEVIN BURNAND, ANTHONY YOUNG, JONATHAN LUCAS

EXTENT P/H	1200 p, hardback
PRICE/ISBN	£99.00 0443072116
PUBLISHER	Churchill Livingstone (London), 2005
REVIEWER	David Deardon
STAR RATING	*****

The third edition of the *New Aird's Companion in Surgical Studies* is a main core text, which provides a comprehensive grounding for all surgical trainees and thoroughly covers all aspects of MRCS surgical training. Its predecessors provided a core reference for surgical trainees. The second edition was recommended on nearly all surgical training reading lists and was the only major text linked to the *Surgeons in Training Education Programme*TM distance learning course of The Royal College of Surgeons of England. It was also recommended reading by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. The third edition continues to enjoy this status and, although it has been completely restructured in order to meet the needs of today's MRCS candidates, it remains a 'must have' for all those training for surgical careers. It also serves as an excellent reference for the established general surgeon wishing to keep abreast of modern surgical practice.

The editors have retained many of the popular features of previous editions, including key references appearing on every page for quick and easy access, and some chapters also list relevant useful websites. However, 85% of the chapters are completely new or have been heavily revised from the second edition, bringing the content up to date. The chapters follow an anatomical pathway from the head and neck down through the chest and abdomen to the limbs.

This format is easier to follow than its predecessor, with the first chapter on the history of surgery giving an excellent start to a series of basic surgical scientific chapters. These cover fluid, electrolyte and nutrition balance; haemostasis and blood transfusion; surgical infections and the use of antibiotics; analgesia and anaesthesia. There are supported chapters on burns, transplantation and plastic surgery, prior to the book moving into the more traditional chapters on vascular, neurological, endocrine, gastrointestinal, urological and paediatric surgery. As in the second edition, this book contains 16 chapters covering all aspects of orthopaedic surgery.

There are over 100 brand new, high-quality and easy-to-understand line illustrations and the book has been comprehensively redesigned in two colours (blue and white)

throughout. This provides structure and consistency, making each chapter easier to follow and understand. Tables and surgical sieve lists are highlighted in blue boxes, which stand out from the free text, thereby aiding concentration and revision.

There are over 150 pages of excellent quality full-colour plates. Many photographs, previously published in the second edition in monochrome, now appear in full colour. A large percentage of these are contained within the skin and soft tissue, breast and acute abdomen chapters where they are most relevant.

Although there are 100 contributors to the book, each chapter has been edited to provide a clear, concise text that is easy to read and informative. This is ideal for the busy trainee surgeon studying for the MRCS examinations. The majority of the authors are leading figures in British surgery with a few contributors from South Africa. The text is, therefore, not as intense as many that originate from North America and this is undoubtedly one of its attractions. Despite the large authorship, there is a clear and direct writing style throughout, supported by excellent illustrative and written content.

This book successfully achieves the objective of offering a single comprehensive surgical text for trainees. The new edition is hard bound and offers one of the most exciting revisions of a surgical textbook in years. It will be a valuable aid for all basic and higher surgical trainees as well as an excellent one-stop information source for established surgeons.

EMQs for Surgery

LOUIS FLIGELSTONE, ALUN DAVIES

EXTENT P/H	336 p, paperback
PRICE/ISBN	£25.00 190337832X
PUBLISHER	tfm (Shrewsbury), 2004
REVIEWER	John Winstanley
STAR RATING	****

As the editors point out in the introduction, multiple choice questions and the extended matching questions (EMQs) in particular have become an important component in surgical examinations and are likely to remain so in one form or another in the future. It is also true that success in examinations depends on thorough preparation, not just in terms of knowledge but also in examination technique. The purpose of this book is to address both those issues by providing questions on common and important topics together with the answers and, where necessary, a brief discussion outlining the reasons for the answer. This is much more helpful than a series of correct answers with no explanation.