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.

The book comprises 16 chapters, each covering a main surgical specialty, knowledge of which is expected for most UK examinations, and the questions have been devised by specialists in the field (22 in all). The number of questions in each section varies a little depending on the subject. Most areas are covered and there are useful sections on anaesthetics and intensive care although pain relief does not seem to be covered, which might have been a useful addition.

This book is no mean achievement because writing good EMQs that avoid making the answer too obvious or too obscure is a difficult task and, on the whole, the various authors have achieved this well. On some occasions, the phrasing of the question and the juxtaposition of the options and stems is not always clear, nor does it always adopt the format of presentation of EMQs set for the MRCS examination. It would, therefore, be wrong to see this book as simply a 'crammer' for the MRCS and the authors do not make that claim in the preface. The book is targeted at surgical examinations in general, including both the MRCS and FRCS. I think this book would be a useful addition to the surgical trainee's library. It can easily be dipped into, providing a good means of self-assessment to highlight areas that are poorly understood as well as for practising the technique of EMQs.

Recent Advances in Surgery 28

IRVING TAYLOR, COLIN JOHNSON

EXTENT P/H	229 p, paperback
PRICE/ISBN	£35.00 1853156108
PUBLISHER	RSM (London), 2005
REVIEWERS	Mohammed Salman and David Deardon
STAR RATING	****

Each year, Irving Taylor and Colin Johnson's immensely successful *Recent Advances in Surgery* series produces a volume that attempts to cover areas of interest and trends in current surgical practice as well as revise in depth advancing areas in the surgical specialties. The latest edition is no exception to this traditional formula. The editors have combined contributions from 33 authors including established surgical consultants, academics, surgeons in training and a podiatrist to produce an essential source of reading for trainees preparing for the intercollegiate examinations as well as consultant surgeons in clinical practice wishing to keep abreast of topics not immediately related to their daily workload.

Volume 28 is divided into six sections covering surgery in general, surgical practice, gastrointestinal surgery, vascular and transplantation surgery and a review section. Within this structure, there are 15 well-written chapters and a series of colour plates that are grouped together at the beginning of the book.

The section on surgery in general comprises three chapters of diverse content covering training technology, bacterial translocation and sepsis, and pre-operative patient optimisation, all areas of immense practical importance to the modern practising surgeon. With the current emphasis on evidence-based practice, the importance of technology cannot be overlooked and this chapter does well to highlight the role of technology in modern-day surgical education, emphasising the value of technological skills for the surgeon and in the care of surgical patients. Bacterial translocation in surgical patients and the hypothesis of the 'gut origin of sepsis' is timely and well linked to the last chapter in this section which covers the difficult issue of pre-operative optimisation. The chapter emphasises the maintenance of all aspects of gut function in critically ill patients and particularly in high-risk (ASA III and IV) surgical patients. It provides a planned and concise approach, which is easy to follow and practical.

Four diverse subjects are covered within the surgical practice section that are increasingly of interest to general surgeons and examiners alike. Chapters on the diagnosis and treatment of abdominal tuberculosis, the current trends in management of malignant melanoma, the controversies in the management of inguinal hernia (including different surgical treatment modalities, outcomes, serious complications, recovery time and cost) as well as the classification and management of intestinal fistulae are all hot topics for discussion.

Section 3 covers gastrointestinal surgery and contains very useful, up-to-date overviews of the standards in treatment of pancreatic disease and adjuvant therapy in colorectal cancer. The more trendy topics of laparoscopic banding for obesity and diagnostic laparoscopy for gastrointestinal malignancy are also well reviewed and provide a good working framework from which to develop study and further reading.

It is also good to see the inclusion of a section on vascular/transplantation surgery. The chapters in this section provide a useful update in areas of surgery which are not always included in general surgical books of this type. They provide the reader with a broader insight into the practice in these two complex, high-risk fields.

Thankfully, the final section, which reviews a number of randomised controlled trials of relevance to today's practising surgeon and trainee, has been maintained in this edition. With today's need for on-going, evidence-based practice, this edition provides useful information on a wide range of topics. These include inguinal hernia repair, colorectal surgery, breast surgery, pancreatic and hepatobiliary surgery, upper gastrointestinal surgery and melanoma. These topics follow on well from the areas reviewed in the previous edition.

The compact, A5 format of this volume follows the established successful formula of its predecessors. Revision of each chapter is easy as important key points are highlight-