surgeon. It is also essential reading for residents who are working for their board or final fellowship exams.

Anatomy of General Surgical Operations

GLYN JAMIESON

EXTENT P/H	240p, hardback
PRICE/ISBN	£44.99 0443100071
PUBLISHER	Churchill Livingstone (London), 2006
REVIEWER	Andrew Raftery
STAR RATING	****

Safe surgery is founded upon accurate knowledge of the appropriate anatomy. The purpose of this book is to bring the latter into the operating theatre to describe operations principally in terms of the anatomy concerned. The second edition of this book describes the anatomy of general surgical operations in 44 chapters written by a variety of specialists in their fields, with all the chapters being co-authored by the main author. Although entitled 'General Surgical Operations', many of these operations would currently be undertaken in the UK by specialist surgeons, particularly those on the head and neck, neurosurgery and vascular surgery. Indeed, it is difficult to know what the definition of general surgery is at the present time, especially in the UK.

The preface is very short and does not clearly indicate what the author considers to be the appropriate readership for the book. Certainly, many of the chapters are too advanced for those taking the MRCS but are eminently suitable for those taking the intercollegiate speciality FRCS in general surgery and equivalent examinations, in particular the Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

The second edition has been totally redesigned with new art work and there is a greater coverage of the anatomical variation that the surgeon will encounter. There is also a greater accent on endoscopic procedures. The book is divided into seven parts – abdominal operations, general surgical operations in the thorax, head and neck surgery, surgical oncological procedures, arterial and venous surgery, general surgical neurological operations and surgery of the skin.

Chapter 9, which describes the various forms of vagotomy, is a little dated but is of historical interest with the authors indicating that this operation is rarely undertaken nowadays. I particularly enjoyed reading chapter 15, which gives an exceptionally clear and practical approach to the anatomy of the anal canal.

There were one or two inaccuracies in the book. For example, Figure 1.4 is not very clear and is poorly labelled (surely the first part of the figure should be labelled 'rectus

sheath – above the costal margin'). Also the third part of the figure should refer to the internal rather than external oblique aponeurosis while the word aponeurosis is also misspelt. In addition, some of the figures are unclear especially Figure 21.3, which is poorly drawn and at one point incorrectly labelled. Figure 23.1 is also unclear and poorly labelled. There is also some lack of consistency; in Chapter 21, Figure 21.4 contains the Latin nomenclature of muscles.

In Chapter 36, the abdominal aorta is described as passing through the aortic hiatus in the diaphragm. Strictly speaking, there is no aortic hiatus in the diaphragm as the aorta passes behind the crura of the diaphragm in an osseo-aponeurotic opening between the vertebral column and the diaphragm and, therefore, clearly behind the latter. In Chapter 37, the external iliac artery is described as crossing behind the mid-point of the inguinal ligament rather than the mid-inguinal point.

Apart from these minor criticisms this is an excellent book describing the anatomical basis for general surgical operations. It is clearly written and the majority of the diagrams are excellent. Being written by surgeons it accentuates the important aspects of applied anatomy, giving sound practical advice. The problem is to whom would I recommend this book in the UK? Certainly, I would recommend it to those studying for the intercollegiate speciality examination in general surgery. Many of the chapters are probably too advanced for those studying for the MRCS. More experienced surgeons will also find it useful as a source of reference that clearly demonstrates the practical application of anatomy to the art of surgery.

Cracking the MRCS Viva: A Revision Guide

IAIN AU-YONG, SIMON HOWARTH, TJUN TANG, ROBERT SAYERS

EXTENT P/H	550 p, paperback
PRICE/ISBN	£24.99 9780340906460
PUBLISHER	Hodder Arnold (London), 2007
REVIEWER	Clare Heywood
STAR RATING	****

This new book sets itself the enormous task of helping surgical trainees through their MRCS viva. Three of its authors have recently been through the viva in London, Edinburgh and Glasgow, and, together with a senior examiner for the intercollegiate examination, have come up with a book that guides the candidate through what they could be faced with in the examination. This includes working through numerous possible viva topics, with commonly asked questions and their answers.

The introductory section works through examination technique, giving memorable mnemonics and a surgical

sieve to use while describing conditions and their causes. The importance of being methodical and logical is emphasised, starting with the basics. It also gives advice on how to say 'I don't know', and reminds the candidate never to lie. There is then a list of important diagrams and equations that should be committed to memory, most of which are also found elsewhere in the text. It suggests that you can show you are well prepared for the examination by taking a pen and paper into the viva to recreate the diagrams as you answer questions.

The rest of the book is split into six sections: applied surgical anatomy, operative surgery, applied surgical pathology, principles of surgery, applied surgical physiology and critical care.

Each section is organised alphabetically, which does lead to much page flicking if you wish to revise, for example, the nerves supplying the arm. However, there is a very thorough cross-referencing system running throughout, linking the various sections and chapters, illustrating how questions in a viva may flow. At the beginning of each chapter there is a list of all related topics within the book, which saves referring to the index.

The anatomy section is made up of 20 chapters, each 2–3 pages long, starting with possible viva questions related to the topic. The text goes on to answer these questions in succinct form, making the major points with the aid of further mnemonics. The subsequent sections continue in the same style, with possible questions, lists of related topics and the required information presented as bullet points, tables and reproducible line drawings.

Operative surgery covers the most common procedures that could be expected of a trainee and also some larger procedures such as carotid endarterectomy and renal transplantation. I was surprised to find that the only oncological

surgery covered in this section is breast, and little attention is paid to bowel procedures other than appendicectomy and hernia repairs. There is, however, a section on the operative management of bowel cancer in the pathology section. Five pages are devoted to orthopaedic-related approaches and procedures, covering Colles' fracture, scaphoid fractures, surgical approaches to the hip, dynamic hip screw insertion and the approach to the knee joint.

Applied surgical pathology begins with a very helpful A–Z guide of pathological terms. Infection, inflammation, metabolic disorders and neoplasia in their many forms are worked through, including universal precautions and HIV. Principles of surgery continues along the same theme, looking at incisions, diathermy, stomas and tourniquets, covered by bullet points and question and answer sections. Applied surgical physiology concentrates particularly on the kidney and successfully makes renal physiology seem simple over a few pages. Action potentials and effects at neuromuscular junctions bring medical school memories flooding back.

Critical care receives over 100 pages and contains many important definitions, with some drawn from the physiology section. The criteria for entry into high dependency/intensive care units and the definition of various organ failures are clearly listed, with acute respiratory distress syndrome, respiratory failure and ventilation covered in some detail.

This book is an excellent purchase for anyone about to sit the viva; it can give you confidence in what you know and is full of helpful ways to remember basic anatomy and physiology. The first edition does, however, contain a number of printing errors, particularly in the anatomy section. Its main potential pitfall is the uncertainty in the examination system within the new run-through training, which could leave its advice on technique obsolete. But even *Modernising Medical Careers* cannot change anatomy, surely?