I must admit I had one or two niggles reading the book. The classification of chronic suppurative otitis media into safe or unsafe and tubotympanic or attico-antral is arguably less preferable to the more recent and simpler one of cholesteatoma or not and active or not. Similarly, I would not personally put 'recurrent vestibulopathy' in the same diagnostic box as 'vascular loop syndrome'. I also wonder whether some specialists would take issue with post-nasal drip as a cause of chronic cough. That said, these are issues that occupy hours of specialist debate and often whole ENT conferences, so the authors can probably be forgiven for including their own views.

Finally, I wonder whether the inclusion of more definitions and classifications may make this a useful book for those revising for postgraduate ENT examinations. This would obviously have to be carefully balanced against not making it too dry or complicated for the rest of the readership. Overall, I felt that this was an excellent book and would wholeheartedly recommend it to its target audience of medical students and juniors. One or two minor changes and inclusions could broaden its appeal still further.

Ear, Nose and Throat and Head and Neck Surgery (3rd edn)

RS DHILLON, CA EAST

EXTENT P/H	123 pages, Paperback
PRICE/ISBN	£25.99 0443073112
PUBLISHER	Churchill Livingstone (London), 2006
REVIEWER	Nicholas Marks
STAR RATING	****

This is the third edition of this book and, as with each edition, the tendency is to increase the breadth and scope of information covered. ENT and head and neck surgery has become increasingly subspecialised. The main authors have, therefore, sought specialist input but at the same time have tried to retain the original target audience and homogeneity of style. It is aimed quite clearly at those new to the specialty. It is a primer for those starting in this field: medical students, GPs developing a special interest, nurses and paramedics, and junior doctors in the specialty who need a working guide.

The format is described as an 'illustrated colour text' and each topic is dealt with on a double-page spread. Compressing all the information on any particular subject into a set space has made the authors select carefully what they include as essential information. The presentation includes liberal use of colour in photographs, drawings, diagrams, and tables, all within a soft-covered A4 book. At the end of each section there is a summary box. It is an attractive presentation and easy to find the information one requires

speedily. The text is brief and to the point. It is highly didactic and, as such, generates some controversial statements, although none of these matter too much considering at whom the book is aimed. Indeed, they may be useful talking points if the book is used as a teaching resource.

The photographs are excellent in demonstrating disease processes well and will aid diagnosis. Those of the tympanic membrane and oral cavity were particularly good. There might be scope to increase their number and range in future editions. Some of the diagrams, in contrast, seemed a little laboured and added nothing to what had already been said in the text. For example, a photograph of an adenoidal child would have been far more useful than the size:age distribution graph, the details of which had already been described in the text. Also, the diagram to explain the tuning fork tests just didn't.

The authors have elected to exclude virtually all operative detail. This is entirely correct for their target readership, most of whom are unlikely to be operating and it helps to keep the book concise. Those who buy this book are likely to use it to dip into to support their learning programme, to help before seeing a patient with a known problem or for pre-examination revision. It competes with web-based materials and, as such, its great strength is portability and the facility to add one's own notes. One of the few criticisms, therefore, is its large format. It just is not pocket-sized. Overall, however, one would have to conclude that it achieves what it sets out to do and will continue to be a valuable resource for those looking for a concise and readily accessible grounding in the fundamentals of the specialty.

Arthroscopic and Endoscopic Spinal Surgery: Text and Atlas (2nd edn)

PARVIZ KAMBIN

EXTENT P/H	376 pages, Hardback
PRICE/ISBN	£103.00 1588295222
PUBLISHER	Humana (New Jersey), 2005
REVIEWER	Jonathan Lucas
STAR RATING	**

This is a multi-author text with 28 authors covering the subject of arthroscopic and endoscopic surgery principally of the lumbar spine. There are additional chapters covering vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty, techniques in pain management, interspinous implant for spinal stenosis, chemonucleolysis, nucleus replacement and frameless stereotactic imaging techniques. The editor is one of the pioneers and innovators of percutaneous and arthroscopic spinal surgery so the content is presented from the perspective of the enthusiast for these techniques. The book is principally a text on how to perform the procedures and is richly illustrated. However, there

is no consistency in the presentation of the figures, style varying from chapter to chapter and the photographs are of equivocal quality. The order of the chapters is also unusual in that discectomy is covered in chapters 4, 9 and 19.

The techniques pioneered by Dr Kambin and described in this book were developed in the 1980s; however, very little evidence is presented for the efficacy of the techniques described. The additional material of newer techniques is of interest but is not comprehensively covered, nor is there clear indication of what the role of these techniques should be to the modern-day practising spinal surgeon. A strength of this book is the description of percutaneous transpedicular approaches and minimally invasive techniques in pain management for the spine surgeon as these topics are often less than optimally covered in other texts.

The book is accompanied with a CD that shows video footage of Dr Kambin performing the techniques described in the book for lumbar discectomy and segmental instrumented fusion. The striking feature is of the high level of surgical skill that is required to perform the surgery and the huge complement of specialist instrumentation that is required.

This is a book of interest to the enthusiast for percutaneous spinal surgery; however, little evidence is presented for the efficacy for the techniques described and advocated. It needs to be included in any comprehensive library of spinal surgery for reference but it is probably not a necessity for the practising spinal surgeon or resident.

Oesophagogastric Surgery (3rd edn)

MICHAEL GRIFFIN, SIMON RAIMES

EXTENT P/H	435 pages, Hardback
PRICE/ISBN	£67.00 0702027359
PUBLISHER	Elsevier (Amsterdam), 2006
REVIEWER	Tim Wheatley
STAR RATING	***

Many surgeons will already be familiar with the *Companion to Specialist Surgical Practice* series of books and the publishing of the third edition this year is a welcome revision of this popular and useful resource. The *Oesophagogastric Surgery* book at last has its correct title (changed from *Upper Gastrointestinal Surgery* in the previous two editions) and is aimed at surgeons in higher training and practising consultants in keeping with the overall aim of the series. The editors have added to the existing list of contributors, the majority of whom are established experts in the current management of oesophageal and gastric conditions to provide up-to-date evidence-based information on both benign and malignant disease.

There are three completely new chapters in this third edition that cover the management of early oesophagogastric

cancers, gastrointestinal stromal tumours and motility disorders. Comprehensive literature reviews on the first two topics provide an excellent summary of current management including areas of controversy and uncertainty, and highlight these two areas of increasing interest. The difficult and often marginalised subject of motility disorders is approached clearly with very practical suggestions albeit in the shortest chapter of the book; though some of the detail regarding definitive procedures (present in other chapters) is lacking.

The other 15 chapters have been revised and rewritten in varying degrees to ensure their subject matter is as up-to-date and relevant as possible. Some topics, such as the treatment of complications of previous upper GI surgery, have changed little since the second edition was published in 2001 and this chapter has received only cosmetic alterations. In other areas, such as radiotherapy and chemotherapy in treatment of oesophageal and gastric cancer and the surgical management of morbid obesity, there have been important advances that are incorporated into the new text to represent current practice.

All of the chapters are easy to read and address their subject matter comprehensively. In addition, the new style of double-column pages, clearer headings and subheadings, and generally smarter tables is more user-friendly than before. The addition of a 'Key Points' summary at the end of each chapter is excellent, and provides a good summary. The *Companion* series stresses the importance of evidence-based practice and this book uses extensive referencing throughout to support points that are discussed. Important references are highlighted in the main text with a 'scalpel code' which is very helpful for those interested in key papers and the long list of references at the end of each chapter will provide a useful resource for those looking for even more reading. Some of the black-and-white photographs have been reproduced in colour in the middle of the book but these are not clearly indexed to the original text and it is a shame that more colour could not have been used throughout.

A new feature for the *Companion* series is the link to an e-learning website designed for trainees to perform self-assessment. The site is easy to access, free of charge and provides basic and advanced levels of assessment in an intuitive format. At the time of review there were only the oesophagogastric assessments available but these appeared useful and I suspect will see heavy use immediately prior to examinations.

I like the *Companion* series of books, and this particular book achieves its aims in an excellent fashion. General surgical trainees will find more than they need to know about oesophagogastric surgery here, while oesophagogastric trainees and consultant surgeons can rely on it as a good knowledge base. By bridging the gap between more basic general textbooks and large 'reference' texts, this book has a niche and by regular updates it remains relevant. I would recommend it to all who have an interest in the specialty.