trainees wear white coats these days! They have achieved this objective admirably and they make no claims that it is intended as a detailed text with discussions of opposing views on management.

The book covers all the major spheres of surgery likely to be encountered by an SHO or SpR. As well as covering topics within general surgery, it also includes sections on neurosurgery, orthopaedics, urology and plastic surgery, so that somebody reading this book from cover-to-cover should end up with a broad knowledge, certainly from the point of view of final MB and MRCS. In addition, there are more general chapters on investigations, shock and trauma, pre- and postoperative care and malignant disease. There is also useful information on communication skills and breaking bad news. The layout is good, with boxes in the text to highlight important points and useful, simple diagrams. There is also a quick reference index for finding the sections dealing with common surgical emergencies. The text gives pointers on how to reach a differential diagnosis, which is very useful in today's era of specialisation.

One of the best pieces of advice I ever had as a trainee was that it was better to know a little book well than a big book badly: this is a little book that is worth knowing well. The authors apologise in the preface for not including much that is in line with modern medical educational theory. I think the apology is unnecessary as, ultimately (despite the current enthusiasm for problem-based learning), like most practical, down-to-earth subjects, surgery is best taught in the first instance didactically rather than theoretically.

Body Contouring After Massive Weight Loss

AL ALY

EXTENT P/H	400 pages, Hardback
PRICE/ISBN	US\$450.00, 1576262111
PUBLISHER	Quality Medical Publishing (Missouri), 2005
REVIEWER	Dai Davies
STAR RATING	*****

We are all aware that there is a global epidemic of obesity in adults and children. According to current estimates, more than 1 billion adults are overweight. The UK Department of Health

predicts that one in three adults and a fifth of all children, a total of 13 million people, will be clinically obese in the UK by 2010 and will present a crippling burden to the NHS. There has been a huge increase in surgical procedures to facilitate weight loss in the US. Figures from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons show that the biggest increase in demand for cosmetic surgery in the last 2 years has been to remove skin excess in massive weight-loss patients. This book with two CD-ROMs edited by an experienced surgeon, Dr Aly, is therefore timely.

The book opens with a very good review of the surgical treatment of morbid obesity of which the laparoscopic adjustable gastric band procedure is just one of five surgical possibilities. The authors emphasise the importance of a team approach to such patients, including a psychiatrist, dietician, exercise physiologist, bariatric surgeon and a plastic surgeon.

The main part of the book describes surgical techniques to excise redundant skin divided into anatomical regions. Procedures such as belt lipectomy, lower body lift with medial thigh lift, and buttock lift are all well presented with the appropriate anatomy and very good illustrations. This is reinforced by the two CD-ROMs – one clearly demonstrates the operation of belt lipectomy and the second, upper-body lift.

Dr Aly rightly emphasises the high complication rate associated with operating on this group of patients. In a consecutive series of 70 patients having belt lipectomy, 56 had at least one major complication, for example, seroma, wound dehiscence, psychiatric difficulty, infection, tissue necrosis as well as pulmonary embolus and deep vein thrombosis. At the end of each chapter, Dr Aly's experience is highlighted in a 'Summary of Pearls'. Surgical operations of the upper half of the body are equally well covered.

The presentation of this text is extremely high as one would expect from Quality Medical Publishing. The list of contributors to the book is both impressive and comprehensive and each chapter is well annotated with the appropriate references to the scientific literature.

Overall, this book is a must for the presumably small group of surgeons who will become involved with this group of patients. It is not for the faint-hearted: the possibility of major complications is real but this is a good start for surgeons developing an interest in this area. My only criticism is that the CD-ROM on upper body lifting could have been better edited but otherwise I strongly recommend this book and give it five stars.