PostScript

BOOK REVIEWS

Clinical guide to sports injuries

Edited by Roald Bahr and Sverre Mæhlum.
Published by Human Kinetics, 2004, \$95 USD
(Amazon). ISBN 0736041176

A new book from Scandinavia raises the bar (no pun intended) in sports medicine textbooks. The main strength of this book is its use of lavish high quality illustrations throughout with over 400 colour pictures and 120 photos. All of the artwork is also included on an accompanying CD-ROM for use in lectures and illustrations. The artist, Tommy Bolic, was the man who illustrated Peterson and Renstrom's famous text *Sports injuries: their prevention and treatment*. Those of us who cut our teeth on the first edition of that book decades ago will instantly recognise the high standard achieved.

The book takes a problem orientated approach to sports injuries. As one would expect from two Norwegian editors, the text is highly organised throughout and is able to maintain the clinical focus of each problem as the reader is taken step by step through the diagnostic thinking, history, exam, testing, management, rehabilitation, and prevention. The tight editing ensures a level of consistency across the book, something not always achieved in a multi-authored text.

This text is an ideal starting point for those embarking on a sports medicine career and also provides valuable insights for experienced clinicians wanting to extend their knowledge. The CD-ROM is of course a welcome bonus and ever so useful for giving talks. Book of the year!

Rating

• Presentation	20/20
• Comprehensiveness	18/20
• Readability	20/20
• Relevance	20/20
• Evidence basis	15/20
• Total	93/100

P McCrory

Boxing: medical aspects

Edited by Friedrich Unterharnscheidt and Julia Taylor Unterharnscheidt. Published by Academic Press, April, 2003, \$195 USD (Amazon), hardcover. ISBN 0127091300

This is a serious piece of work. At 900 pages and almost 5 kg it is, without a shadow of doubt, the most complete review and analysis of the medical aspects of boxing ever written. Delve into almost any part and realise that there is a lot more to boxing than two blokes punching the living daylight out of each other. For example, have you ever pondered why woodpeckers are not punch drunk or why a boxer can be felled by a blow to the

stomach or chest just as easily as to the head? The answers lie somewhere within the pages of this monumental tome.

In boxing medicine, Friedrich Unterharnscheidt is well known. As a US board-certified neurologist and neuropathologist, he has spent his whole professional life studying this area. His unique background also provides him with an exceptional ability to integrate the European and US literature in a way that no existing American textbook can possibly emulate. In an era in which scholarship is increasingly synonymous with a Google search of the term "boxing", this book is a revelation. In providing the historical perspective and the breadth of clinical topics, it outstrips the older multi-authored boxing texts such as those by Barry Jordan¹ and Bob Cantu.²

This book is therefore a good starting point for anyone with more than a passing interest in boxing. Unlike multi-author texts, this book does suffer from the weakness that it is difficult for a single person to keep up with the breadth of evolving literature across this entire field. Owing to publication delays beyond the author's control, there are relatively few references cited from the last five years. Hopefully this will be rectified in the next edition.

In addition, some of the areas that are currently topical lack the perspective that a wider understanding of neurotrauma can bring. Unterharnscheidt devotes quite a long discussion to Barry Jordan's 1996 work on ApoE and chronic brain injury, yet ignores the far wider, recently published work on how this genotype affects the outcome of all levels of traumatic brain injury regardless of the cause. Similarly there is little discussion on the ethical issues raised by whether individual boxers should be tested for this gene.

There are also imbalances in the chapters on neuro-investigations, with only a brief discussion of neuroradiological changes in boxers, yet there is a long chapter on EEG changes after head injury, a technique that most neurologists have long abandoned because it has little use in this setting.

There are some aspects of this book that do cause concern. For example, there are case descriptions of boxers said to have chronic brain injury from boxing. The most recognisable commentary is on Muhammad Ali, where his Parkinsonian condition is described as being boxing related largely on the basis of media reports or comments from boxing promoters rather than the official medical reports from the Mayo Clinic in 1980 and Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Centre in 1984, where it is clearly stated that he was not suffering from a boxing related neurological condition. In a textbook such as this one, this mistake is disappointing and detracts from the veracity of other descriptions.

But this is nitpicking. My biggest disappointment in the broader media discussion on boxing is the lack of scientific rigor that is brought to the boxing debate. It is not unusual to hear figures of anywhere between 20% and 60% of chronic CNS abnormalities ascribed to professional boxing, yet few of these people would realise that the boxers studied in those cited papers commenced their sport over 100 years ago. It is not too

great a leap of understanding to appreciate that boxing has changed since that time and that a better appreciation of the current literature would be worth while. This book argues neither for nor against the continuation of boxing, but lays out the literature and the body of scientific knowledge necessary to provide a meaningful background for the issue.

This book should be compulsory reading for anyone who wants to study this area, particularly, those who feel the need to comment publicly on the boxing debate.

Overall, what can I say about it? For the researcher or clinician with a strong interest in this area, it is money well spent. Unterharnscheidt gives a unique historical perspective of boxing medicine and covers much of the clinical information that will not be found elsewhere. There are anecdotal observations and comments about technical issues of boxing that only a true aficionado can appreciate. This book is written by a master in the field.

To paraphrase Johann Wolfgang von Goethe "Ein Gegenstand, wohl beschaut, schliesst ein neues Organ in uns auf" (An object, well studied, opens a new organ in us).

Rating

• Presentation	12/20
• Comprehensiveness	18/20
• Readability	12/20
• Relevance	15/20
• Evidence basis	12/20
• Total	69/100

P McCrory

References

- 1 Jordan B, ed. *Medical aspects of boxing*. 1993.
- 2 Cantu RC, ed. *Boxing and medicine*. 1995.

Running and science: an interdisciplinary perspective

Edited by Jens Bangsbo and Henrik B Larsen. Published by Institute of Exercise and Sport Sciences, University of Copenhagen, 2001, A\$47.95 + GST, pp 17, softcover. ISBN 8716123492

This is the spiritual successor to the excellent volume on the marathon published by the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* (volume 301) in 1977. It is a series of articles based on presentations at the Second European Congress of Sport and Exercise Science held in Copenhagen in 1997. There were 800 delegates and some 400 papers presented by 100 different speakers. The book is one of a series, and other volumes have appeared on soccer and sailing.

There are seven chapters, including topics such as exercise physiology, running economy, prevention of overuse injuries, and principles of training. The book opens with an excellent chapter by Tim Noakes summarising the physiological capacity of the elite runner. In his inimitable, almost conversational style, Tim