Colorectal Surgery, 4th edn

ROBIN KS PHILLIPS

EXTENT P/H 346 pages, Hardback
PRICE/ISBN £74.99, 9780702030109
PUBLISHER Saunders (London), 2009
REVIEWER Karen Nugent
STAR RATING ****

Colorectal Surgery is an extremely well-written book, which is part of a series of eight different volumes. Together, these comprise a companion to specialist surgical practice. These books are designed for surgeons in higher surgical training and those looking for updates in specialist fields of surgery and *Colorectal Surgery* fulfils its requirements well.

The editor has drawn on an extremely well-selected group of experts from around the UK and abroad and this updated version is strong on evidence base and has wide literature reviews of the topics chosen. The first two chapters on anorectal investigations, and colonoscopy and flexible sigmoidoscopy are up to date and provide excellent background for consultants who should be aware of the newer techniques and opportunities available within these two fields.

The following chapters provide clear, unambiguous and helpful discussions around the management of common problems that affect all colorectal surgeons. The colour photographs are of good quality and the layout makes it extremely easy to read. The penned important points are, in general, good summaries of the chapters. Overall, the chapters are up to date and discuss some of the more modern problems within the field of coloproctology.

In summary, this is an excellent book, well written and well edited. It should provide easy access to information for any senior trainee or consultant who wishes to update on colorectal surgery, patient management and investigation within this field.

Spine Disorders: Medical and Surgical Management

JD BARTELSON, H GORDON DEEN

EXTENT P/H 292 pages, Hardback
PRICE/ISBN £65.00, 9780521889414
PUBLISHER Cambridge University Press (Cambridge), 2009
REVIEWER Nicholas Brooke
STAR RATING ****

This book has developed from a course at the Academy of Neurology's annual meeting given by the authors over several years. The opening chapter describes the basic sciences relating to the spine. Subsequently, the authors subdivide the spine into the cervical, thoracic and lumbar

regions and describe, for each region, the clinical evaluation, investigation and possible treatments for the variety of conditions affecting the spine.

There is a comprehensive chapter on diagnostic testing. As well as structural imaging such as MRI, CT and myelography, the authors discuss neurophysiological tests, provocative and beneficial injections, and other diagnostic studies such as bone densitometry.

For the budding surgeon, there are several chapters that consider specific imaging prior to surgery and give a more detailed surgical management. This covers a wide scope from clinical assessment, through diagnostic pitfalls to the surgical indications and approaches, with surgical complications. There are several useful chapters, including one on when, and to whom, to refer spinal patients, another on what to do if patients do not improve following surgery, medical management of patients undergoing surgery and an appendix entitled 'Please don't make my mistakes'.

The final chapters look at newer developments. Minimally invasive surgery is well discussed both conceptually and in practical terms. New technologies ranging from disc arthroplasty to image guidance are discussed. A small section is even written about assessment of new devices, trials and government regulation.

Throughout the book, the text is clearly written and easy to read. It is not didactic and gives a balanced view about all topics, presenting the various arguments. It is well supported by additional information in tabular form and good graphics including illustrations, pictures of imaging and photographs. References are supplied for further reading and a useful glossary has been compiled. The index enables any individual subject to be found easily.

The authors believe that the book will benefit all health-care providers who see patients with spine disorders. I would certainly agree that it provides a very good insight into all aspects of spinal disease and the surgical treatment of such conditions for all non-medical practitioners. It would also provide a very good grounding for all surgical trainees considering embarking upon a career in spinal surgery.

Clinical Surgery: A Practical Guide

QASSIM F BAKER, MUNTHER I ALDOORI

EXTENT P/H 434 pages, Paperback
PRICE/ISBN £29.99, 9780340940846
PUBLISHER Hodder Arnold (London), 2009
REVIEWER Paul Nichols
STAR RATING ****

I really enjoyed reading this book, which focuses on a practical approach to surgery as stated in its title. It is not a com-

prehensive surgical textbook but is a comprehensive text in the practical aspects of surgery and should appeal to its readership. This is clearly aimed at the peri-membership trainee and, as such, is a valued addition to the subject, giving a slightly different aspect to other texts in this field. Each of the 31 chapters is well researched and written, covering the whole field of practical surgery including peri-operative care, laparoscopic surgery, day surgery, obesity, surgery of the elderly, *etc.* The last four chapters look at the common tropical diseases as they affect general surgical practice – hydatid, schistosomiasis, tuberculosis and typhoid. These diseases are becoming more common in Western medicine and their inclusion makes this book widely relevant.

There are a large number of authors, drawn from the UK and internationally. Each chapter, therefore, has a slightly different writing style. This actually adds to the text, making it very readable, and the editing has drawn the different chapters together – exemplified by the high-lighted key points throughout and the summary and question sections at the end of each chapter. There are excellent bibliographies throughout, which are concise and up to date. This is a well-written text suited for all peri-MRCS trainees and I highly recommend it.

A Guide to Cancer Genetics in Clinical Practice

SUE CLARK

EXTENT P/H	238 pages, Paperback
PRICE/ISBN	£30.00, 9781903378540
PUBLISHER	tfm (Shrewsbury), 2009
REVIEWERS	Diana Eccles and Andrew Douglas
STAR RATING	***

This concise, multi-authored textbook on cancer genetics sets out to introduce clinicians to common inherited cancer syndromes and allow identification of at-risk individuals

and families. It is orientated towards a surgical audience. With edited textbooks there is a balance between individual author expression and a unifying style. This book favours individual approaches in general and reads like a series of essays. The absence of an index enhances this impression.

Every chapter has a 'key summary points' section and some have useful management algorithms. The introductory chapter on basic genetics is an elementary introduction at medical-student level, which contrasts with some much more complex genetic detail in later chapters (*e.g.* the NF1 chapter). The chapter on ethical and legal aspects with illustrative case histories is a useful one. While many chapters are informative, clear and balanced, such as the chapters on FAP and MEN syndromes, others seem to lack a wider context. For a largely surgical audience, the inclusion of NF1 and not NF2 is surprising. A chapter on inherited renal cancer might have been a useful addition and perhaps more relevant than a chapter on hereditary pancreatic cancer.

Some authors present justification or are clear about the lack of evidence for suggested surveillance strategies; others advocate intensive surveillance without any supporting evidence. For example, CT scanning and small-bowel series every year or so would expose a patient with Peutz-Jegher's syndrome to a considerable cumulative radiation dose without clear evidence of benefit. The presentation of risks and genetic testing is generally good but there are a few notable errors. For example, a 25% risk of pancreatic cancer in cystic fibrosis is very misleading (source not referenced). The competing mortalities for CF patients are such that pancreatic cancer mortality, although increased about 5-fold over the population risk, is actually negligible.

The final summary chapter looks more at the future rather than summarising the book's contents and, unfortunately, it mixes somatic and inherited genetic changes in a somewhat confusing way. This book contains a lot of solid and useful information about cancer genetics and as an introductory text for non-specialist clinicians it has much to offer. However, subsequent editions would certainly benefit from a more consistent style and an index.