K. Skou Andersen

**Christopher Bulstrode, Joseph Buckwalter, Andrew Carr, Larry Marsh, Jeremy Fairbank, James Wilson-Macdonald, Gavin Bowden (eds):
Oxford textbook of orthopaedics and trauma**

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One can follow the progress in orthopaedics on the Web, in journals and in textbooks, among other places. This process – at least on the Web and in journals – is not always easy, and progress evaluation can prove tedious and time-consuming. When it comes to textbooks, however – and particularly a new textbook that compares information to that contained in previous editions or older textbooks – the contents will indirectly tell an evolutionary story: Which medical issues are now being focused upon? Which have disappeared from the pages because they no longer pose serious problems?

Comparing treatment modalities for the same types of injuries, then and now, provides an overview of technical progress in anaesthesiology and biomaterials, and an understanding of fundamental biological issues such as wound healing, bone metabolism and malignancies. It also provides information on different aspects of orthopaedic management and the behaviour and attitudes of the surrounding society by using words that reveal biases; and reporting confounding factors, outcome measures, utility analysis, quality of life, somatization, claims and other purviews.

Glancing through the detailed and thorough index of the most recent edition of this textbook, one gets a vivid and informative view on the progress of orthopaedics during the last decade. It is obvious that treatment of bone and soft-tissue tumour is currently a primary focus, as is the treatment of spinal diseases. The subject of poliomyelitis, which is on the verge of being eradicated (at least in industrialised society), occupies far fewer pages than it did 25 years ago.

This new and major textbook on orthopaedics and traumatology is impressive. Edited by an Anglo-American team from Oxford and Iowa Universities, it contains contributions by more than 300 authors, mostly – although far from exclusively – from the United Kingdom and the United States. It is intended to provide the reader with a comprehensive coverage of the relevant background, science and theory, practice and decision making

skills and operative techniques required to provide modern care for orthopaedic and trauma patients.

The three-volume set consists of nearly 3,000 pages. The text is divided into five major sections covering fundamental science, adult orthopaedics, trauma, paediatric orthopaedics, and paediatric trauma. Part 1, entitled “Fundamentals”, is close to 500 pages and by far the shortest. Volume 1 includes a number of interesting and well-written chapters on the principles of epidemiology, research methodology, diagnosis and treatment. These chapters are highly recommended for any younger surgeon who, in the future, would like to submit a manuscript to an orthopaedic scientific journal. There is also a major subsection on tumours, and chapters on haemoglobinopathies, thromboprophylaxis, infection, pain control, biomechanics, locomotion analysis and imaging.

The section on adult orthopaedics not only includes systematic information on the joint and bone systems but chapters on spinal disorders, idiopathic scoliosis and spondylolisthesis, and a subsection on general disorders (osteoporosis, cancer and skeleton, rheumatoid arthritis, prosthetic joint infection and neuromuscular disorders). Some diseases covered in this last subsection are introduced again in the paediatric sections.

The trauma section gives principles of classification, a systematic overview on fracture management with a diversity of closed and open surgical methods, and the principles of different operative treatment modalities. The last part of Volume 3 is devoted to paediatric orthopaedics and trauma.

The book is highly illustrated with well-reproduced X-rays, clinical photos and histological sections, both in black and white and colour. Each chapter is referenced and includes a list of titles for further reading. The editors have performed an impressive task for which they are to be congratulated.

The need for a current textbook in orthopaedics has been growing for some years. Now the book is here. No doubt this textbook will be essential reading, not only for trainees, but for experienced specialists as well. It deserves a place in the libraries of all orthopaedic and trauma departments.