Books received


A Colour Atlas of General Surgical Diagnosis (Wolfe Medical Atlases—15)

Every surgical teacher will agree that there can never be a substitute for the real thing in learning the art of clinical examination. However, an atlas equally well could be the value of really first class illustrations collected together in an atlas such as this for learning purposes. The author, together with his photographic department, must be congratulated on an excellent series of photographs which demonstrate the whole range of general surgery. Common and less common conditions, emergencies as well as 'cold' problems are included and there are some excellent illustrations of appearances both at the bedside and in the operating theatre. Morbid anatomy and radiology are well covered and there are many examples where both the naked eye and pathological appearances of the same patient are shown. This will prove to be an excellent aid to the revision student as well as to the postgraduate surgical trainee and the illustrations themselves are ably supported by excellent brief descriptions in a carefully prepared text.

Atlas of Surgical Operations

The best way to learn surgical technique is to assist a well recognized master and then to carry out a procedure under his guidance. Second to this is to watch the expert at work. But, in this less than ideal world, a surgeon may need to consult a textbook or atlas on operative technique as a substitute for these time-consuming but invaluable methods of acquiring knowledge. The fourth edition of this well known atlas is designed both for the surgeon in training and for the established general surgeon who wishes to revise some rather unfamiliar procedure. Most of the standard general surgical procedures are illustrated, including abdominal surgery, hernia repairs, mastectomy, neck procedures and peripheral vascular operations. There is a chapter on the gynaecology which a general surgeon may be called upon to perform, but thoracic and orthopaedic surgery are omitted. The text is brief and didactic with introductory sections on anaesthesia and on pre- and postoperative care. The illustrations are profuse and beautifully executed line drawings which are extremely easy to interpret. Certainly, of the current one-volume atlases on operative surgery, this is among the best available.

Cerebrovascular Disability and the Ageing Brain

‘Vascular disease is the pacemaker of ageing’ hence this comprehensive account of cerebrovascular disability has wider implications for the care of old people in general.

In considering the aetiology of strokes the old static idea of end artery syndromes of haemorrhage, thrombosis and embolism has been discarded in favour of a dynamic concept regarding cerebral, carotid and vertebral circulations as a continuous system ‘heart to head.’ Impaired circulation in multiple vessels being more important than single artery occlusion.

Chapters deal with immediate management and drug treatment. It is interesting to note the author’s opinion that hypertensive patients who sustain a stroke ‘may have much more to lose than they may gain from ill-considered anti-hypertensive therapy’.

Assessment of capacity is important in judging prognosis and progress of recovery after a stroke. The inclusion of descriptions of semi-quantitative tests will help readers to achieve an objective approach in a field which is often emotionally charged.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of this book is the positive way in which it deals with general management and rehabilitation. The author shows great insight into the problems of a stroke patient—particularly the aphasic. Sensible suggestions are put forward such as the use of a mirror to allow patients to correct faulty posture, always approaching
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