

Book Review

Congenital Heart Defects – Decision Making for Surgery Volume 1 – Common Defects

Antonio F. Corno

Steinkopff Verlag Darmstadt, 2003, 145 pp

ISBN: 3-7985-1415-1; Price: €119.95, US\$129.00

I HAVE BEEN PRIVY TO THE GESTATION OF THIS book, as indicated by the author in his generous “Acknowledgments”. The book has had a long gestation, but has finally emerged as a useful little addition to the educational support needed by those training in paediatric cardiac surgery and its related disciplines. This volume is the first of a two-part project in which Dr Corno discusses the morphology and diagnosis of congenital cardiac malformations, concentrating on those aspects which have the greatest impact on the decisions that need to be made so as to establish the best therapeutic options. Dr Corno then provides excellent intraoperative photographs to illustrate what goes on in the operating room. As John Kirklin used to tell all his colleagues and students, nine-tenths of the success of any procedure depends on what happens in the operating room. Dr Corno’s illustrations are exemplary in this respect, and cover in brief but sufficient detail the key steps in the common operations for congenital cardiac disease undertaken nowadays throughout the world. The more complex and esoteric lesions will be covered in the second volume of the projected series.

The excellence of the illustrations of the operative procedures in this volume, however, are totally overshadowed by a happening that should serve as a cautionary tale to all those involved in publishing in this electronic age. Several of the illustrations, such as those shown on page 116, are credited to Dr Enrico Chiappa. Unfortunately, the illustrations were reproduced without the permission of Dr Chiappa, who was fully aware

that the illustrations in Fig. 1.16.3 originated from Andrew Cook and myself. Had we been approached for permission to reproduce, we would, of course, have granted such permission. But we were not approached. Thus, publication in this fashion constitutes an egregious breach of copyright. The publishers, Steinkopff Verlag, are equally blameless, although perhaps they should have obtained letters of permission before proceeding to publication. Their response, having discovered the breach of copyright, has been exemplary. All of us involved in this sorry saga hope that it will be satisfactorily resolved so that the book can re-appear with an “Erratum” sheet explaining the appropriate origin of the many illustrations used by Dr Corno that have already been published, and in the knowledge that all the original authors have granted permission for their illustrations to be re-used. It would be a great shame if such a potentially valuable little book, representing 25 years of work by the author, foundered because of a dispute concerning copyright. At the same time, this experience shows how careful we all now need to be in the way we use and reproduce illustrations in the era of electronic publication.

*Robert H. Anderson
Editor-in-Chief
Cardiology in the Young
Cardiac Unit
Institute of Child Health
London, UK*