

Atlas of Head and Neck Surgery

R Simo, P Pracy, R Fernandes (eds)
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I have often expressed a reluctance to review ebooks and try to hold out for a paper version. For a book of this length, the latter is much easier on the eyes. However, this one is expensive (with little difference between the hard copy and the ebook) and times are hard for publishers, so I settled for a pdf. I did so as this is such a significant publication for a UK readership. I hesitated to ask one of my most reliable reviewers, Professor Pat Bradley, to take on what could only be the ebook, so I worked on my own effort. But, bless him, he did agree and the result is a double act. There is some inevitable repetition, but that reflects that we did reach our conclusions independently, and very favourable they are.

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This is a welcome publication aimed at trainees and early consultant surgeons who desire or have chosen to pursue a career as a specialist head and neck surgeon, whatever primary career path initially chosen, whether (in alphabetical order) general surgery, oral and maxillo-facial surgery, otorhinolaryngology, or plastic and reconstructive surgery. This reviewer has an issue with head and neck surgery being referred to as a 'sub-specialty' because it involves working in a multidisciplinary manner and as head and neck surgery is not recognised as a specialty of its own, then such a working pattern must be a 'super-specialty'!

Over the decades there have been several publications of atlases of head and neck surgery. One of the first was in the 1960s by J Lore, using line drawings. In the recent past, several new publications, mainly from the USA and India, amongst others, have included coloured clinical and operative illustrations with line diagrams to complement the text. At present there are many ways to access such an atlas of head and neck surgery via Open Access, ebook versions, as well as the traditional hard- and soft-covered versions.

Springer has led the way recently with several publications related to head and neck surgery, including a number of editions of *Atlas of Head and Neck Surgery*. This publication deals with adult head and neck surgery, and has been edited by two UK senior Otorhinolaryngological head and neck surgeons and an American Oromaxillofacial surgeon. The

spectrum of the surgery is covered in 51 chapters, authored by an international panel of surgical specialists, of which the majority are from the UK, but include authors from North America, Europe, and Australasia. The publication is 582 pages long, with an index. It is divided into 20 parts, each containing one to five chapters. The volume contains copious figures, coloured clinical pictures, radiographs and drawings, which is to be expected. The artwork that accompanies many of the surgical and clinical pictures enhances the quality of the publication enormously.

This volume is titled as an atlas of surgery rather than a textbook and should therefore concentrate on the processes established with performing surgery: indications, procedure, aftercare, special techniques to aid in unexpected events, avoidance of complications, and rehabilitation and/or long-term outcomes. All of the chapters covered and met this challenge, in part or as a whole. There were, however, a number of chapters that exceeded the concept of an atlas and presented as a textbook chapter (including the surgery chapter).

One chapter cited some 50 references. Several of the chapter texts duplicated topics and these could be amalgamated should a second edition be contemplated, for example the sections on the excision of salivary stones, surgery for a ranula, lip surgery, surgery of the maxilla and/or palate, and thyroid surgery (isthmus-sectomy). The citing of references in the text is to be encouraged, both up-to-date and relevant to surgery, but five chapters suggested further reading instead of listing references. The presentation of surgical tips and recommendations, both as techniques and for avoiding complications, should be highlighted in boxes where relevant or as bullet points as part of the final summary.

This publication is to be admired and the editors and authors are to be congratulated on completing such a mammoth task, as should Springer for inviting and challenging a very competent editorial team to select suitable authors. Maybe next time, should the chapters be presented on time and on deadline, which seldom happens, editorial clipping and pasting might reduce duplication, and highlight tips and suggestions, thus improving the educational experience for the reader!

This publication is highly recommended and should be purchased by each National Health Service multidisciplinary team in the UK and elsewhere, and made available to be consulted by surgical teams prior to undertaking head and neck surgery. The purchase price of both the hardcover and ebook sadly makes this publication unlikely to be bought by an individual trainee or junior head and neck consultant.

P J Bradley
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viva table, as candidates for the Fellowship examination decades ago. *Tempus fugit*.

The title, as an atlas, led me to expect many pages filled with large operative photographs, a few diagrams and a paucity of text. This was a pleasant surprise as the accompanying text proved so comprehensive. The illustrations, viewed on my PC monitor, are of superb quality and I would imagine them looking as good when in print. I do like to see every mucosal vessel in focus and I have never seen endoscopic stapling of a pharyngeal pouch so well captured. The many colour diagrams represent excellent artwork and they work particularly well when positioned next to an operative photograph, illustrating the content graphically. That is a feature throughout.

Again, as per the title, the text concentrates on the surgical approaches to 15 sub-sites in the head and neck, but it includes benign and malignant tumours, neck space infection, non-neoplastic disease such as pouches, ranula or thyroglossal cyst, and even traditional tonsillectomy. A notable feature is the emphasis on practical tips in any procedure. A great example is the opening chapter on out-patient laryngeal fibre-optic endoscopy, for which a whole chapter seemed quite excessive, at least initially. However, I learnt so much about various tricks and manoeuvres to facilitate glimpses of inaccessible areas and only wish I had read this a few decades ago.

Some chapters carry boxed tips (e.g. submandibular gland excision or robotic surgery in the oropharynx) and I do like to see them highlighted that way. Pearls of wisdom often included suture placement, avoidance of nerve damage or

use of retractors, again emphasising that this is a hands-on surgery text.

Appropriately, the book steers clear of radiotherapy or chemotherapy, of otology, even temporal bone resection, or the pathology of cancers. There is a nice index and I sought out 'verrucous carcinoma' and the answer to a favourite viva question, 'What do you understand by the term dysplasia?', with no success. That is entirely appropriate for a book with this title, which is indeed a superb achievement by the editors. The advantages of the ebook then became apparent with the excellent search facility of a pdf and 23 links to the term 'dysplasia'. I also sought out 'guidelines' and found many, even a mention of the latest UK National Multidisciplinary Guidelines, a supplement to this journal in April 2024.¹

This book will have great appeal to trainees, to experienced super-specialists (I have long known that Pat Bradley will not tolerate the term sub-specialists) in ENT, plastic or maxillo-facial surgery. I will grudgingly admit it actually works very well as an ebook too, but do not do what I did and read its 582 pages, beginning to end, on a screen.

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Reference

- 1 Homer JJ, Winter SC, Abbey EC, Aga H, Agrawal R, ap Dafydd D *et al*. Head and Neck Cancer: United Kingdom National Multidisciplinary Guidelines, Sixth Edition. *J Laryngol Otol* 2024;138(S1):S1–224.