

Book Review

TEXTBOOK OF PEDIATRIC OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGY – HEAD AND NECK SURGERY

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Volume I – Otolaryngology and Rhinology (459 pages)

Volume II – Head and Neck (274 pages)

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This heavyweight, hardback, two-volume textbook is something of an enigma. The Forward mentions that all three editors have mixed adult and paediatric practices, and a glance at the list of chapter contributors reveals few well-known paediatric otolaryngologists. The authorship is international but the majority of contributors are from the USA. In their Preface the editors define an extremely broad intended readership, ranging from medical students through trainees in both Medicine and Surgery to established practitioners, presumably including otolaryngologists and in particular paediatric otolaryngologists. At the same time, they state that the work is intended as “a practical, comprehensive and contemporary guide and reference” for all these groups. It seems hardly possible that such all-encompassing aims could be achieved for such a wide ranging readership and one therefore expects compromises to be made.

The Otolaryngology section is the longest with clearly laid-out chapters and contributions from a number of internationally well-known otolaryngologists. Most of the chapters are quite short and in comparison 34 pages on “Pediatric Temporal Bone Imaging” and 38 pages on “Pediatric – Adolescent Otolaryngologic Skull Base Surgery” seem excessive. It is astonishing that the chapter on “Surgery for Congenital Aural Atresia” does not even *mention* the BAHA despite

its well established track record in Europe. In other chapters, use of the term “serous otitis media” instead of “otitis media with effusion” gives a rather out-dated feel, and the detailed account of stapes surgery seems out of place in a paediatric text.

As expected, the Rhinology section is the shortest but contains a good, concise chapter on “Pediatric Allergic Rhinitis” and a useful contribution entitled “Perspective on Pediatric Sinus Surgery” which emphasises a conservative approach.

However, Volume II (the Head and Neck Section) is curiously unbalanced. It seems scarcely credible that only three pages of Chapter I are devoted to laryngotracheal airway problems: laryngotracheal stenosis is dismissed in two paragraphs, old classifications are used for both laryngeal clefts and subglottic stenosis and the whole account of paediatric laryngology is superficial and unimpressive. In contrast 7 chapters are devoted to neoplasms of the head and neck, 3 chapters are devoted to facial trauma and whilst there is a chapter on cleft palate, nothing is included about velopharyngeal insufficiency! Tonsillitis and tonsillectomy get just three paragraphs in a 26 page chapter entitled “Infectious and Inflammatory Illness of the Oral Cavity and Pharynx” and obstructive sleep apnoea is not dealt with at all. The section on Langerhans Cell Histiocytosis is out-dated (the most recent reference cited was published in 1981) but in contrast there is a good chapter on “Recurrent Respiratory Papillomatosis.”

There are a surprising number of typographical errors and many of the photographs have not reproduced very well. Altogether, this book is very much a curate’s egg, and its patchy coverage of the sub-specialty means that it cannot really be regarded as satisfactory for any of its intended readership groups.

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