

Book Reviews

OPERATIVE OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGY

N. Bleach, C. Milford, A. van Hasselt, Blackwell Science Ltd, 1997.

ISBN 0 8654286 2X. Price £175.00

In his preface the senior editor, Nigel Bleach, explains that he and his co-editors conceived this volume from a dissatisfaction with textbooks of operative ENT surgery available in the UK in terms of their content, their outdated style of presentation and their high price for the trainee surgeon. They set about to produce a comprehensive single volume textbook of operative otorhinolaryngology written by young surgeons with a continuity of style and artwork throughout. The book was to be aimed primarily at the trainee specialist surgeon in the UK, Australasia, India and Africa with authors to be drawn from a correspondingly wide variety of countries and institutions. Their hope was that the book would be detailed enough to be a valuable and practical reference for the young consultant surgeon. It was not written to compete with major sub-speciality specialist texts in oto-neurosurgery, skull base surgery, head and neck surgery, endoscopic sinus surgery or facio-plastic surgery.

Let me say from the outset that I feel the editors have undoubtedly succeeded in realizing their initial goals. They have produced an elegant book with 67 chapters starting with aspects of general anaesthesia for ENT surgery and surgical outcome analysis and audit and then leading through sections on otology, oto-neurosurgery and skull base surgery, rhinology, endoscopy, the oral cavity, pharynx and larynx, the neck, thyroid and major salivary glands and plastic and reconstructive surgery. The 66 authors indeed come from all over the world and are all young and actively involved in their specialty. The artist, Mike Elm has redrawn some original operative diagrams in order to present a uniformity of style which is clear to the reader.

I found that on the whole, the approach to each chapter was uniform except for the references or further reading sections. On occasions techniques were described but not referenced. In some chapters there was no indication of further reading at all and in other chapters the further reading amounted in some instances to whole textbooks without any specific reference as to which is the relevant part. I was also a little disappointed in those chapters in which the use of lasers was recommended. Whilst appreciating that there are many different types of lasers it would be helpful to give an indication of the fire settings and time of exposure.

The chapter on surgical outcome analysis and audit is particularly pertinent to the times in which we now live and gives good guidance on the methods available and

in particular their virtues and limitations.

Overall, this beautifully produced volume will give the trainee an excellent overview of all the aspects of surgery in our speciality.

MR NEIL WEIR,
Editor

EAR, NOSE AND THROAT SURGERY Medicolegal Practitioner Series.

J. R. Cherry, Cavendish Publishing Ltd., 1997.

ISBN 1 85941 210 6. Price £37.50.

There was a long tradition that, on completion of training, the apprentice was warned of the awful fate awaiting those who divulged the secrets of his chosen profession to outsiders. Brave then, the modern author of a textbook of otolaryngology aimed at the legal profession. However, specialists, currently providing expert opinion, need not fear redundancy and financial ruin despite the exhaustive nature of this book. Any lawyer who does succeed in reading the 536 detailed pages will acquire a greater knowledge of our speciality than any UK medical graduate or most General Practitioners. It is more likely that this text will prove to be a reference work for enlightenment in a specific case. The result is, potentially, a very significant book which, while expressing personal opinion (of a surgeon highly experienced in medicolegal issues), may well influence the legal profession and set the standards by which we are judged.

The substantial text includes 21 case histories, based on the author's personal experience, which few will read without mixed emotions of horror, familiarity, gratitude to the deity and occasional amusement. Half of these cases are otologic but, curiously, do not include the minefields of stapedectomy and endoscopic sinus surgery. The text is very readable and opinions expressed non-controversial especially in conceding that a substantial minority of specialists may, reasonably, adopt different practices to the convention. Thus, we read that Reinke's oedema requires incision and aspiration but that it is acceptable to strip the cord or that, although 'chronic sinusitis is far more effectively controlled by FESS than by conventional surgery,' the latter is still reasonable. Issues of informed consent, evidence of training and CME, experience of a procedure are repeatedly stressed in decisions on negligence.

The success of this book will depend on an interesting marketing challenge. For the legal profession it will make a useful reference book with a nice index and glossary of our jargon. For the newly appointed consultant, rarely trained in medicolegal issues, the chapter on noise-induced hearing loss, alone, would justify the cost of this book. Indeed, it would prove a