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The Herbst appliance. Research-based clinical management (2008)

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Emil Herbst devised his 'bite jumping' appliance over a century ago. It passed through an initial period of popularity, falling out of favour in the 1930s, but was resurrected by Pancherz some 30 years later. Subsequently, it has enjoyed a widespread revival and, according to the authors of this book, over 50 variants of it have now been described—happily they do not try to describe them all. In fact this book, in contrast to some single-appliance monographs, has a remarkably brief section on appliance design, the emphasis being placed firmly on research and clinical practice.

The authors bring together 30 years of meticulous research on the Herbst appliance and apply it in clinical contexts to good effect. Each chapter of the book takes a key topic and develops it systematically, presenting the results of research, showing some relevant clinical examples, summarizing with conclusions and clinical implications, and ending with a full list of references. Topics covered in this way include the effect of the appliance on profile, skeletal pattern, teeth, muscles, and temporomandibular joints. Further chapters examine anchorage problems, adverse effects, complications, breakages, and relapse. Chapters on treatment indications and timing put the

appliance in context. The book ends with a brief concluding chapter which usefully summarizes the authors' views on the contemporary role of the appliance.

The book is clearly and concisely written. It is beautifully presented with copious diagrams and clinical photographs. Criticisms are few. The authors commendably aim to make the work research based, but they give little indication of the quality of the research evidence on which their conclusions are based. It is disappointing to find no comparative trials of the Herbst against other types of functional appliance; the controls for the experiments were mostly untreated cases or Bolton Standards. An irritating deficiency is the absence of an index, hard to explain in a book of this quality—its place being taken by a table of contents.

There is nevertheless a wealth of valuable research information in this book, presented in a form which lends itself to everyday clinical application. It promises to become the definitive work on the Herbst appliance and anyone using (or considering using) the appliance would benefit from studying it in depth.

David Tidy

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