

Book Reviews

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Illustrated lecture notes in oral and maxillofacial surgery (2008)

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Publisher: Quintessence Publishing Co. Ltd, New Malden, Surrey, UK

Price: £83.00

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This glossy hardback of 333 pages sets out to cover a very large subject base; according to the author ‘as much of the current scope of oral and maxillofacial surgery as possible’. Intended primarily to help junior hospital clinicians, it is also aimed at students as a source of core knowledge and guidance for examination preparation.

The text, which is arranged in double column format, reads easily and is abundantly signposted with subheadings

that make navigation simple. There is a transatlantic bias to much of the content, but the British way of doing things is also acknowledged. Neat and informative diagrams and good quality photographs that really do illustrate the points being made also assist the clarity of structure within each topic. Yet, this bullet point style, with all of its helpful lists that convey a rapid overview, at times is guilty of a degree of brevity that results in failure to explain, leaving the point

under consideration without context or relevance. Of course, the broad spectrum of content from practical pointers on gowning and gloving to clefts and cranial deformity via oral pathology (and medicine) is bound to be short on detail in some areas, and in mitigation, there are plentiful suggestions for further reading, but there is also an element of inconsistency in the level of information on offer.

There are, for example, excellently compiled categorizations of post-operative complications and temporomandibular disorders, both topics that often appear more complicated than they should. Then, other sections have an asymmetry, with fundamental aspects of, for instance, diagnosis of oral malignancy receiving scant attention, while the procedure to carry out a radical neck dissection is described at some length. The target readership appears to have momentarily escaped the writer's desktop.

Plainly, decisions on what to include in a book with such broad horizons will always be open to criticism, and the differences of opinion may amount to little more than an altered perspective of style. But to state that antral packing to support the orbital floor post-trauma is 'largely of historical interest' and then proceed to detail how it is done is an interesting use of half a page.

Quibbles about detail aside, this book effectively does what it says on the cover. It is a collection (sometimes a selection) of topics that are of relevance and interest to the senior student and the young surgeon. It prompts and whets the appetite and then informs within the limitations of one volume. A compromise—yes, but a pretty good one for £83!

Paul D. Robinson

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