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Commissioned to mark 60 years of publishing by Quintessence, the declared objective of the book is to provide authoritative commentaries on the current state of dentistry, and an inspirational insight into its future.

The book consists of 11 chapters, commencing with 'Dentistry today' and concluding with 'Dentistry tomorrow'; the remaining nine chapters examine the areas of public dental health, dental radiology and imaging, restorative dentistry, prosthodontics, periodontology, endodontology, implant dentistry, orthodontics, and oral surgery. Each chapter explains how developments in the profession have brought us to the present situation, closing with a discussion titled 'Vision 2020', which highlights future predictions for that area of dentistry. This arrangement of well-illustrated chapters allows the reader to dip and browse, although the absence of an index makes a search for a specific topic and cross-referencing an onerous task.

'Needs-related preventive programmes based on risk prediction', the longest chapter in the book, summarizes the major studies in dental public health over the past 30 years, with explanatory diagrams and charts. Despite initially looking daunting, this chapter was surprisingly easy to read and digest, and fairly illuminating.

The chapter on 'Dental radiology and imaging' provides an interesting history about the evolution of dental radiology, unsurprisingly predicting that cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) will become the mainstay as costs decrease and safety increases, with a probable distinction between large-volume (craniofacial) and small-volume (dental) CBCT. An interesting offshoot would be the development of image-guided handpieces, facilitating truly minimal tooth preparation, and intelligent imaging systems that will be able to analyse images and perform specific diagnostic tasks.

The well-illustrated chapters on restorative dentistry, prosthodontics, and endodontics detail their development to

date, but aside from technological advances, all discussed the fact that the further development in dental materials would be essential to progress. Predicted advances in implantology include computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacture custom-made implants, ceramic implants in aesthetic zones, and stem cell technology leading to biologically created teeth. In 2020, we are likely to see the routine use of lasers, guided navigation during surgery, and gene technology in oral surgery, with rigorous quality control processes to identify clinicians with less favourable surgical outcomes.

Disappointingly, the chapter on orthodontics was the shortest in the book, with nine of the 10 pages dedicated to the biology and physiology of tooth movement and only one supporting diagram. Controversially, the author questioned whether the advance in temporary anchorage devices has been a desperate attempt by orthodontists to get involved in implantology, when previous conventional means of treating such cases were adequate. Other than a mention of spider proteins being used in future archwires, there was a paucity of information about possible technological developments in orthodontics, which was disappointing. Instead, the field was said to be at a crossroads, either advancing in a creative scientific direction or to be left behind as a technical, procedure-driven clinical speciality: choosing to take the former path would mean retraining the profession to apply molecular, evidence-based and patient-customized care.

Overall, I found this text interesting and informative, although its price may limit this book to library shelves for reference. Practising orthodontists may well enjoy owing a copy to consult from time to time. However, I suspect that it will probably be of more interest to undergraduate students looking for an introductory textbook or for an overview of each speciality.

Gavin Power

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