

BOOK REVIEW

Textbook of Complete Dentures

A.O. Rahn & C.M. Heartwell (Jr), 5th edn; ISBN 1550091980; BC Decker; February 2002, Price £51.99

The ever-increasing data available via the Internet and/or journals brings into question the need for the so-called standard textbook. With current information so readily available, such books are often out of date by the time of publication. There is in this an inherent paradox. Disciplines that are not presently at the forefront of scientific research may be most suited to a textbook but should there be few advances in that discipline new editions are unnecessary. Heartwell's Text Book Of Complete Dentures is such a book.

The reviewer's copy is a bulky, soft cover of some 528 pages. It is made up of 24 chapters, 19 of which refer to the treatment and laboratory stages of complete denture construction in its various forms.

At the outset the author informs us that he has accomplished, with the help of colleagues, an update of all aspects of the book's contents. However, the text is unnecessarily voluminous. For example 50 pages are devoted to a history of articulators. Important issues are sometimes given scant or even no mention. A chapter on mandibular movements makes no reference to the edentulous state and not one reference in the

bibliography refers to complete dentures. The section on anatomy claims special relevance to dentures. Out of 34 illustrations only 10 have some bearing on this. In the references at the close of this 'updated' chapter the latest were from the early 1990s – all three of them textbooks. The chapter 'Surgical Preparation for Complete Dentures' encompasses 42 pages, the final 11 'devoted' to implant procedures. The bulk is a discussion of subperiosteal treatment – hardly contemporary therapy. Here too there is an extensive bibliography citing 223 authors. The latest paper dealing with this subject is 1991. There are many illustrations but all are in black and white and several betray their antiquity.

In all honesty this reviewer cannot recommend this book. It will be of little value to the undergraduate and likewise the qualified practitioner unless he is looking for a replacement of a once beloved text. In which case he would be better off finding a second-hand copy of a previous edition.

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