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BOOK REVIEW

James Tait Goodrich (ed): *Neurosurgical operative atlas*, 2nd edn—Pediatric neurosurgery.

Thieme, New York, Hardcover (ISBN 978-1-58890-510-9)

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This multi-authored *Neurosurgical operative atlas*, published under the chairmanship of Professor J.T. Goodrich, covers most of the technical information about how to deal practically with malformations of the CNS and its covering. Twenty out of 46 chapters are devoted to cranio-facial procedures, thus reflecting the influence and personal interest of the chief editor for this topic. Other topics of interest are the approaches for cervico-cranial base malformations, encephaloceles, Dandy-Walker malformation, open and closed spinal dysraphism, hydrocephalus, including shunting and endoscopy, trauma, revascularization procedure for moyo-moya disease and surgery of focal brain stem gliomas.

A significant number of chapters (19 out of 46) were already published in the AANS series entitled the *Neurosurgical operative atlas* (issued from 1991 to 2000, edited by Setti S. Rengachary and Robert H. Wilkins). These have been updated and new contributions represent 27 out of 46 chapters.

Each chapter is organised with a formatted frame: introduction, patient selection, preoperative preparation including anaesthesia and positioning, step-by-step illustrations of the operative procedure (preoperative view of the patient, CT or MRI study, operative drawing and perioperative view, and final results). The postoperative care and early and late complications are also discussed in detail.

For the sake of conciseness, discussions about each procedure and controversies have been discarded (e.g. there

was just a sentence about the indication to operate or not on an asymptomatic lipomyelomeningocele, a well-debated topic!) as tables and references lists.

One of the drawbacks of this type of textbook is that it cannot avoid some redundant information; some chapters have more or less the same title and content. Although the index is an invaluable tool to retrieve the information, one of the disappointments in reviewing this book is the absence of organisation of the chapters. There is an evident lack of grouping the different topics under a common heading, e.g. craniofacial, spinal dysraphism, etc. We suspect that this is partly due to the order of publication of the first edition of this *Neurosurgical operative atlas*, where these articles were issued intermingled with other non-paediatric neurosurgery material.

This type of illustrated textbook should be grasped more as a “How I do it” way of dispensing the message by experts in the field than a complete work, focusing on a paediatric neurosurgery topic. Several esteemed colleagues will therefore depict some personal nuance of how they tackle a classical problem, but in the end the general principles are more or less the same and the young apprentice in paediatric neurosurgery will conclude that “many roads can lead to Rome”.

Education of paediatric neurosurgery is organised in different ways throughout the world neurosurgical community.

This *Neurosurgical operative atlas* is a typical example of the way of promoting education in the North American continent. Completing the self-assessment after reading this monograph gives a certain number of credits that are required by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the American Association of Neurosurgeons (AANS) through their home study examination website: <http://www.aans.org/education/books/atlas3.asp>

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The essentials of this book remain the invaluable messages given by the surgical sketches. Comprehension of the surgical steps in 3D is essential to understand an approach and these schematic descriptions are much more informative than the perioperative images, which only give a 2D representation of what is really done. This should encourage young colleagues to perpetuate the tradition of drawing on the operative report sheet the important steps of

the surgical procedure, as did Harvey Cushing for every patient he operated on. Although other more sophisticated ways of self-teaching of surgery are now available, like online videos surgical sessions provided by neurosurgical journals on the internet, nothing can replace the real personal effort done by each of us to create a sketch of what he intends to do or as a template of what should be done for further similar cases.