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BOOK REVIEW

George Samandouras (ed.): The neurosurgeon's handbook

Oxford University Press, 2010, ISBN 978-0-19-857067-7

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This book is a comprehensive summary of neurosurgery. It covers almost every topic in a concise text. There are numerous schematic illustrations with drawings in black and red, as well as CT, MRI and plain X-ray images. Each chapter is completed by well-chosen references. Numerous tables facilitate rapid understanding of the topics in a synoptic way. The surgical techniques are briefly described, step by step, although I sometimes missed accompanying illustrations (but of course it is not a book concentrating on surgical techniques).

The middle of the book has a few glossy pages with mainly colour illustrations of the histopathology of brain tumours, but also drawings of some surgical approaches.

The format of this book allows readers to carry it in their pocket. The goal should be to give the reader a quick answer to a particular query. I tried to find “pterional craniotomy” for a description of the most frequently used approach in cranial neurosurgery. In the index I found

“pterional approach”, which refers to the chapter on patient positioning and common approaches. There I found the description of the supine position and key points of skull topography. But besides the position of the keyhole, there was no step-by-step description with figures of the craniotomy. If I searched the index under “craniotomy”, I was referred to one single sentence concerning subdural empyema. I had to go to anterior circulation aneurysms to find a description of the technique. I found the index to be difficult to use sometimes.

Besides this minor critique, I think this is an excellent book for trainees. It is very pleasant to read. Staff members will also find it useful in order to access classification scales quickly.

Conflicts of interest None.

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