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BOOK REVIEW

European Manual of Medicine. Series editors: W. Arnold, U. Ganzer Neurosurgery, Book Editors: C.B. Lumenta, C. Di Rocco, J. Haase, J.J.A. Mooij (2010)

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This volume is part of a series of books with the aim to provide the reader with the latest and most up-to-date information on diagnosis and treatment in Europe. It should be the basis for preparing the European board examination.

After an introduction it starts with considerations on training and education in Europe. This chapter contains the basic training requirements as well as the log-book for training record. I was surprised in the table on training requirements to find that for microvascular decompression, for example, the minimum number is 2 and the optimum 5, whereas for lumbar disc the numbers are 50 and 70 respectively, as if lumbar discectomy would need more training than microvascular decompression. I suspect that these numbers have been proposed to satisfy certain training centers with low case numbers rather than to guarantee the quality of training. Indeed microvascular decompression needs at least as much experience as discectomy.

The next part has a section on anatomy, extremely short, at the level of medical students, and a section on clinical examination and diagnostic procedures. The next chapter covers brain tumours, in adults and pediatric, including neuropathology, classification, epidemiology and treatment strategies. This chapter covers 120 pages. The next chapter discusses vascular diseases includes aneurysms, avms, av fistulas, intracerebral hemorrhages and pathologies specific to the pediatric population. It is well written but given the space constraints, 60 pages, it touches the various topics very briefly. This is actually true for the whole book. The

next chapter very briefly addresses infectious diseases of the brain. The following chapter covers head trauma including a section on the cranio-vertebral junction and finally on rehabilitation (very important in my opinion). The next part of the book is on spine with chapters on anatomy, clinical examination and radiology; spinal tumors; degenerative disease; vascular diseases (extremely short, 5 pages), trauma, syringomyelia; rehabilitation. The following part deals with peripheral nerves starting with basic considerations and followed by compression syndromes; peripheral nerve tumours; and finally the autonomic nervous system. The next part is on cranial nerve compressio syndromes. The next part deals with congenital defects and childhood disorders such as dysraphism, craniosynostosis, neurocutaneous syndromes, hydrocephalus. This is followed by a chapter on functional and stereotactic neurosurgery including epilepsy, pain, movement disorders, the functional applications of radiosurgery, image guided neurosurgery, and finally spasticity. The last part is on critical neurosurgical care.

Despite the number of authors the overall presentation of the text, figures and tables is remarkably homogenous and clear. There is a large number of illustrations including some in colors. The book is very well organized. The reader will easily find the topic he is interested in. The authors are right to specify that the book is written for residents and medical students. I would even specify for first year residents. Indeed there is nearly nothing on neurosurgical anatomy and even less on neurosurgical techniques. It certainly forms a good basis for the preparation of a board exam but it is not enough on its own.

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Conflicts of interest None