BOOK REVIEWS

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The evidence for vascular or endovascular reconstruction

Roger Greenhalgh; London; 2002; WB Saunders; 439 pages; $139.00.

This interesting book is a compilation of presentations given at the 2002 Annual Charing Cross Symposium and edited by Dr Roger Greenhalgh of the Charing Cross Hospital. The chapters were all written in advance of the conference, with the authors taking either the pro or the con argument concerning current controversies in the endovascular and vascular management of peripheral vascular disease. The chapters are presented in a debate format with both sides doing their best to describe the current data supporting or disproving such statements as “Carotid stenting will become the gold standard,” “Subclavian artery stenosis is best managed by PTA and stent,” and “Endovascular aneurysm repair will take over emergency abdominal aortic aneurysm rupture.”

While the list of authors is predominantly European, it also includes well-known vascular and endovascular interventionalists from around the world. Each chapter includes a 4- to 6-page description of the currently available data either supporting or disproving the debate topic along with a bulleted summary and an up-to-date bibliography. While some topics only include one set of arguments, more controversial areas such as carotid angioplasty and stenting include arguments from several groups of distinguished authors. At the end of each section, Dr Greenhalgh provides a brief editorial commentary designed to raise interesting questions that arise from the individual arguments, and if possible begin working toward a consensus.

While the majority of topics are endovascular in nature, several continued areas of controversy in open vascular surgical management are included: “Infected grafts require excision and extra-anatomic reconstruction,” “Vein graft surveillance duplex is a waste of time,” and “Surgery heals venous ulcers.” While the number of topics covered is fairly comprehensive, there were several notable exceptions. There were no questions discussing the endovascular management of traumatic vascular injuries, the management of mesenteric arterial ischemia, or the endovascular management of hemodialysis access grafts.

Nevertheless, I found this to be an extremely useful book and have found myself referring to it several times when discussing the benefits and disadvantages of endovascular procedures. I would certainly recommend this text to any person interested in quickly updating himself on the current controversies involving the endovascular management of vascular disease.

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Platelets

Alan D. Michelson; San Diego, Calif; 2002; Academic Press; 956 pages.

Platelets, edited by Alan D. Michelson, is a modern encyclopedia of platelets. In the last 30 years, more than 100 books about the platelet have been published. Many are the proceedings of symposia or dwell on a particular topic in platelet biology. Dr Michelson intended this work to be “a single, comprehensive, and definitive source of knowledge about platelets,” and his book stands out as the most comprehensive and up-to-date review of blood platelets yet published.

The study of platelets (and thrombosis) has always brought together a diverse community of scientists and clinicians—hematologists, pathologists, biochemists, surgeons, and cardiologists, to name a few. This is one reason I’ve always enjoyed studying the platelet, and this multiauthored text brings out the best in the world of platelet experts. From the fascinating foreword by Barry Coller on the history of ideas about platelets, to the final sections on transfusion medicine and gene therapy, this text includes most of the world leaders and best writers in each field.

The first section of 16 chapters contains excellent reviews on the biology and physiology of platelets. While there are large sections devoted to medical disorders, there is also much to interest a vascular surgeon. Beng H. Chong’s chapter on “Heparin-Induced Thrombocytopenia” is a superb, up-to-date review of the disease and its treatments. There is a very comprehensive section on “Tests of Platelet Function” and individual chapters on all the major platelet-inhibiting drugs, as well as diabetes and acquired disorders of platelet function. For someone with an interest in the field, this text offers a very good starting point to obtain a solid and current overview of the topic with clear pointers to more reading.

It is an attractive book with quality illustrations and color plates. The book is large but not unwieldy. The binding is flexible, so the pages sit comfortably open, and the paperstock and typography make for easy reading.

This book probably would be more than the typical clinical vascular surgeon might have use for. But if you do research in any vascular disease that might relate to platelets (and which doesn’t?), then you should seriously consider adding it to your library. It is a large book about small cells of great importance.

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