**Book Review**


The Rare diagnosis and operations register was set up in the UK in 1995. Since then more than 1300 cases have been collected by vascular surgeons representing 22 centres. The aim of the register was to make information on unusual cases and their treatment options available for a wider circle of vascular specialists. So far this has been achieved through scientific publications and by presenting the register on the Joint Vascular Research Group website.

The present book is a further step in sharing the experiences from the registry. Rather than presenting individual cases the register has served as an aid to select the topics covered. Well over fifty authors have contributed and forty-one chapters are included covering a wide spectrum of disorders from the not too unusual popliteal aneurysms to truly rare syndromes, e.g. mid-aortic syndrome.

Behcet's disease, Aortic aneurysm with horseshoe kidney, Iliofemoral venous thrombosis, Phlegmasia and caval filters and Infections after aortic and carotid surgery are examples of excellently covered topics. A chapter on vascular anatomical variations offers useful update on both the clinical significance and embryological background of these variations. Some of the selected topics might be questioned as being slightly to common in this context, e.g. acute arm ischaemia.

Chapters are in general well written and the editors have done an excellent job in achieving a uniform and easily approachable frame of presentation with i.e. useful key points ending each chapter. Reappearance of the same topic in different chapters is largely avoided and when it occurs does not disturb the reading as other angles of similar conditions are often discussed. Reference lists given at the end of each chapter are generally up to date and reasonably extensive. An alphabetic index is unfortunately missing and would have made it easier to find a specific topic.

Strong personal opinion of individual authors in the absence of scientific evidence is only occasionally put forward. One exception is regarding cerebral protection devices in endovascular procedures on the carotid arteries (Chapter 18: Carotid aneurysms), the use of which is clearly not preferred by the author, though no evidence for this view is presented.

In many chapters endovascular radiologists are involved as authors representing the continuing emergence of alternative treatment modalities. In the absence of randomised trials open vascular surgery still though often prevails in the recommendations given in the book, e.g. open vascular surgery is presented as the treatment of choice for subclavian stenoses and occlusions (Chapter 21: Subclavian steal syndrome), a practice already abandoned to the benefit of endovascular procedures in most centres. Also, the corresponding reference list could have included some more recent publications on endovascular therapy.

Other minor points that can be made are in the section on Takayasu's arteritis where it is stated that MR does not include the use of nephrotoxic agents. It does, but normally at lower doses than those used in comparable conventional angiography or CT (Chapter 5 Takayasu's arteritis). In Chapter 22 on acute arm ischaemia the message can be perceived as contradicting. In the introduction arm embolectomy is presented as a procedure involving genuine risks, while in fact the relatively high mortality following this procedure rather reflects the severity of the disease underlying the embolic event. In the concluding key points it is accordingly stated that arm embolectomy can be done with a high likelihood of success at low risk. In the same chapter the term critical arm ischaemia is used where maybe immediately threatened extremity would have been preferred and in line with recent recommendations (e.g. the TASC document), reserving critical ischaemia for the chronic ischaemic state.

To the vascular specialist facing a patient with an uncommon vascular condition this book can be of great help and supplement late hour searches on PubMed. For the vascular surgeon in training Rare Vascular Disorders can work as the...
invaluable advice from a senior colleague having seen at least one or two similar cases before and spent some time going through the recent literature. The book does not replace standard textbooks but offers at a reasonable price a concise collection of the more unusual aspects of vascular surgery.

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