BOOK REVIEWS

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Advances in vascular surgery, vol 6
Anthony Whittimore, Dennis Bandyk, Jack Croenwett, Norman Hertzer, Rodney White; St Louis; 1998; Mosby; 277 pages.

The Advances in Vascular Surgery series offers recent updates on the current practice of vascular surgery. The concept for the work is intriguing. It provides short chapters in a compact book, focuses the sections sufficiently to give a complete review of the topics discussed despite the size restraints, updates the book frequently enough to make the contributions current (the small size of each edition makes the task easier), and rotates the selection of authors for each chapter so that each new edition has a different direction/focus. Thus, each publication provides new information to the series, rather than adding a comprehensive review. The chapters on techniques are generously illustrated.

The current edition is a collection of multiple interesting topics. The sections are broken down into carotid artery disease, aortic disease, venous disease, upper extremity ischemia, lower extremity ischemia, and basic science. The novel techniques discussed include the subintimal (extraluminal) angioplasty, a technique widely touted by Dr Bell and associates in Leicester, United Kingdom, but relatively unknown in this country. The surprisingly good 3-year primary patency rates in the iliac and popliteal regions are reported at 82% and 58% respectively. Unfortunately, no one else appears able to duplicate these results. The section on in situ replacement of infected aortoiliac grafts with femoropopliteal venous segments presents a detailed description of the procedure including excellent illustrations that will be valuable to the surgeon contemplating this technically demanding operation for the first time. Two chapters on endoscopic perforator ligation and saphenous vein harvesting are similarly instructive, although the ultimate benefit, if any, of the procedure remains tantalizingly unclear. The step-by-step description and the focus on photographs and diagrams are extremely helpful for readers (like myself) who have not performed these procedures and who consider the endoscope a potentially frustrating instrument.

Current data reviews on several topics, including endoleaks after endografting (primary vs secondary leaks), carotid plaque morphology (echogenic vs echoluent), gene therapy (angiogenesis vs fibrointimal hyperplasia protection), and varicose vein surgery (ligation vs stripping), were concise, informative, and well referenced. The section on management of several difficult clinical scenarios, including aortic dissection, renal revascularization for salvage, and creative foot salvage from a podiatry perspective, gave reasonable decision algorithms and illustrative examples.

Without question, the modern vascular surgeon has new and unique educational needs and opportunities. Journals must be a part of it, but it can take some time to search PubMed to get the specific information needed. Basic textbooks are also on the shelf, but because of size, they are updated less frequently, they lack portability, and the chapters are frequently lugubrious. I found Advances in Vascular Surgery, Vol 6 to be quite useful. I read the majority of the text quickly. In that small amount of time, I measurably increased my vascular database. The modern student of vascular surgery can ask for no more, although my mentor Dr Porter points out that I may have been starting from a disadvantaged level.

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Parkland trauma handbook, 2nd ed
Fiemu Nwariaku, Erwin Thal; London; 1999; Mosby; 577 pages.

This is a pocket reference handbook, a comprehensive, easy-to-understand, "how-to" guide for use when things go bang in the middle of the night and there is nobody there to bail you out. It is a handbook written by residents for residents, because they know best what the rookie needs to know, and it accurately reflects lessons learned at one of the world's renowned bastions of trauma care.

The expectations are high from the outset, and the user will not be disappointed. The term "user" was chosen on purpose, because this compact, doctor's coat pocket stuffer is intended not as quiet time reading material but as a reliable guide in the heat of the battle, and it works. It is well organized with a two-color scheme throughout, short paragraphs, no-nonsense compact sentences, and each chapter maintaining the same structure.

But this is not just a "This is how it happens at the real trauma center, and this is how it works out the best" kind of cookbook. Careful attention has been paid to the evidence-based approach whenever possible, backed by updated pertinent references, and supplemented by additional reading recommendations for the quiet times. A real strength is the attention to clear precise illustrations of basic technical skills and essential anatomy, in which the blue/black color scheme is maintained for consistency.

Advances in diagnosis, such as ultrasound scanning, and in management, such as nonoperative approach to solid organ injury or changes in treatment of severe head trauma, are included. On the other hand, I could not find any discussion of "damage control" or management of the abdominal compartment syndrome, essential for today's trauma surgeon. I applaud the careful avoidance of con-