Book Review

Essentials of Vascular Surgery

This is a small size, pocket book that briefly covers all the common aspects of vascular surgery. It is well written, with a few good illustrations, and it is printed on good quality of paper. It is divided in two sections: arterial and venous-lymphatic, which are easily distinguished by a different colour on the edge of the page.

The chapters relating to chronic and acute leg ischaemia, aneurysmal disease, extracranial carotid disease, vascular trauma, complications of vascular intervention, varicose veins, deep vein thrombosis and chronic venous insufficiency are well covered. Despite its small size also covers some important areas in vascular surgery such as medical assessment of the vascular patient and local, regional and general anaesthesia in vascular surgery.

There are few important areas that are not covered and the author should consider these in the next edition. These are the aetiology of vascular disease, risk factors and their conservative treatment, as well as the diabetic foot. In the chapter related to chronic leg ischaemia, it would be preferable to emphasis that the initial treatment of intermittent claudication is conservative. A few chapters may merit from updating. For example, in the Venous Leg Ulcer chapter, in contrast to the highlighted statement in respect to the role of superficial veins in postphlebitic limb, there is now evidence to show that when superficial veins are varicose they are not important venous collaterals and when present should be removed in an attempt to promote ulcer healing. In Congenital Arteriovenous Malformations, the use of the Hamburg classification would be preferable. In addition, the headings throughout the book do not follow any consistent order and thus some entities are included under an irrelevant heading, i.e. carotid body tumors appear under vertebro-basilar disease.

Overall, I think that it is a very useful book for medical students, junior doctors, and nursing staff in vascular units, Accident and Emergency departments and primary care. They will find it a friendly companion in their daily practice and very helpful in the diagnosis and management of their patients. Should they want to find further information I think that the book with a similar title ‘Essential Vascular Surgery’ by A.H. Davies, J.D. Beard and M.G. Wyatt, published by WB Saunders would be an inexpensive and more detailed alternative.

My opinion is that the author has achieved his intention to provide an inexpensive, useful pocket guide for junior doctors involved in the care of patients with peripheral vascular disease.

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