

doi:10.1053/ejvs.2001.1575, available online at

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MR/CT Atlas of Anatomy (CD ROM)

Klaus Kuper.

Thieme, 2001.

price £101.75.

The utilisation of additional learning (including CD RoMs) is becoming increasingly important within medicine. This CD aims to depict a digital section of anatomy from MRI and CT scans in a comprehensive and logical fashion. The CD is routinely loaded and has two main sections, one describing CT and the other MRI anatomy. Access to the various sections and the images within are generally of very high quality and easy to use. There is the ability to scroll up and down various images and to change direction from axial to coronal or sagittal planes. There is a very good and extensive labelling of the structures identified, which is supplemented by a quiz function where the student is asked to click on the appropriate area of anatomy listed by the side. A successful click is accompanied by the sound of a gong whilst an error causes a dog to bark! Overall the layout and illustrations are of very high quality particularly of the central nervous system, spine and musculo-skeletal system. However, the angio anatomy of the abdomen and thorax is very poorly demonstrated. The images are of low definition with only very large vessels visible. In addition there are several factual errors including mislabelling of some muscles in the shoulder. There are some individual peculiarities in labelling secondary to translation from German but overall the labelling is of a very high quality. This CD would be useful to postgraduate trainees particularly in radiology but also in other specialities such as orthopaedics, neuroradiology and general surgery. It would not have much benefit to those interested in vascular anatomy.

Overall the wealth of high quality easily archived images outweighs these minor problems and I would recommend this as part of the digital library for diagnostic radiology trainees. It would need to be supplemented by other material particularly in vascular anatomy.

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doi:10.1053/ejvs.2001.1554, available online at

http://www.idealibrary.com on 

Decision making in Vascular Surgery

Cronenwett and Rutherford, Eds.

Harcourt Publishers Ltd. 2001.

390 pages, price £58.00.

This book comprehensively addresses the subject of vascular surgery and does so in an original and user-friendly way. Within each chapter a topic is presented in the form of an algorithm, showing the management pathway that is taken when faced with a particular clinical situation. The decision pathway is accompanied by text, which explains each step to be taken, and the reason for the decision. Background information is provided on each subject and references are given where these decisions are based on research evidence. The book has been split into a progressive sequence of chapters. The initial topics discuss the pre-operative evaluation and management of a patient with vascular disease. This is followed by chapters on cerebrovascular disease, aneurysms, extremity occlusive disease, renovascular disease, venous disease and finally miscellaneous topics that include lymphoedema and trauma.

The chapters are concise and well written. The diagrams are clear and easy to follow. They highlight the decisions that are routinely made and break the decision process into small and manageable stages. Unfortunately, the evidence for these decisions is not always explicit. Most chapters reference their sources but some do not provide a clear evidence-base for their decisions and relate them instead to the authors' own practice. If the evidence does not exist then it would be helpful for this to be explicitly stated.

The book explores difficult problems that are faced in vascular practice such as co-existing carotid and coronary disease. By using the algorithm approach one can easily follow each step in the decision path, and making the problem seem simpler and more logical. This may be especially useful for the inexperienced vascular surgeon. Exploring a subject in this manner also highlights areas of uncertainty and issues that require further research.

There are several interesting chapters that cover newer technologies and procedures such as endovascular aneurysm repair and thrombolysis. The endovascular chapter recognises the fact that this is still an unproven technique, both in terms of cost and effectiveness. The potential benefits and current limitations of this emerging technique are also discussed.