

there is little description of treatment decision making. In this respect, the title of the text, *Vascular disease: a multi-specialty approach to diagnosis and management* is somewhat misleading because most of the content focuses on the many specialties that are involved in the diagnosis and not on the actual management of vascular disease.

Although the contributors represent various specialties and provide insight that concerns diagnostic imaging of vascular patients lacking in most vascular texts, this diversity leads to some variability in content. Some chapters are well written with summarized descriptions of the appropriate diagnostic techniques, interpretations, limitations, and clinical applications, but others contain only illustrative radiographic images with brief descriptive legends. This inconsistency in style and lack of overall organization makes this handbook difficult to use as a quick reference.

Despite these criticisms, *Vascular disease* does provide some useful concise background on vascular diseases and diagnostic testing. The book should be considered a practical supplement to a traditional vascular textbook for those seeking additional information on the modern diagnosis of vascular disease but not a comprehensive source for management decisions.

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### **Surgical research: basic principles and clinical practice, 3rd ed.**

H. Troidl, M. F. McKneally, D. S. Mulder, A. S. Wechsler, B. McPeck, W. O. Spitzer; New York; 1998; Springer-Verlag; 695 pages; \$98.00.

Foreword to the Third Edition:

"Today, the excitement in surgery is about espousing the new molecular anatomy. Surgeons still see the blood and gross anatomical structures as the operation progresses, but their mind's eye is now focused on invisible structures—the growth factors, interleukins, adhesion molecules, second messengers, and transcription factors—that may be disturbed by the disease and by the knife. Today's surgeon is an implicit molecular biologist."

Sir James Black

Noble words. Exciting ideas. Ambitious agenda. God bless Sir James for his inspirational and onward exhortations. We need these encouragements. Academic medicine and surgery and academic aspirants and their respective protagonists may also need a book like this one, but more on this later.

This text is now in its third edition, which speaks well for its appeal and perceived need. Originally published in 1987, with the title *Principles and practice of research: strategies for surgical investigators*, it is organized into 9 sections and 68 chapters by 162 essayists. Several authors have made more than one contribution. The nine section

headings include the following titles: "The surgeon as investigator," "Reading and writing," "Speaking and listening," "Design and methods," "Funding," "Implementation," "Analyzing outcomes," "Ethical issues," and "Perspectives." The contributors encompass an international list of surgical greats and their associates. This edition contains more than 40 new topics, which include developing new information in community practice, computer-based literature searches, and research in surgical education, plus expanded sections on technology assessment, outcomes analysis, and ethics.

The senior editor's introduction to the first edition posits the provenance of the book: "...that while research problems had much in common around the world and many scientists had developed fruitful strategies and tactics for dealing with the problems associated with surgical research, there was no readily accessible source of information about much of the methodology that was evolving so rapidly. The idea of a book on feasible technology for research in surgery and other clinical disciplines became compelling. It would cover the principles of experimental design, biostatistics, epidemiology, starting and finishing research, and the diffusion of results."

The product of this "compelling idea" is a collection of an enormous amount of information (sometimes expert) and personal experience with methods and processes of bench, clinical, and paper research, plus a generous serving of biographical and autobiographical material, surgical history, and a smattering of the history of the basis of western philosophy. Anecdotes abound. All this is entertaining and adds to one's erudition. Much of it is important and of substantial help for the neophyte. For the fatigued and overburdened young surgeon in training or embarking on a first academic appointment, however, it may be a low-level competitor for attention. Sections VI and VII—"Design and methods," and "Analyzing outcomes,"—are helpful. These sections and other focused problems may constitute reason enough for the construction and purchase of the book. Other readers, and there may be many, will find their own interests and needs well served by selectively reading the text. The text displays a weakness of many multi-authored books, which is a lack of firm and unequivocal editorial scrutiny.

Repetition, overlap, and personal opinions and recommendations are frequent. Several chapters might be omitted altogether in the interest of conserving the reader's need to continue with the objective: learning the principles and practice of surgical research.

All said and done, a troublesome question surfaces: why should a book like this, excellent and all inclusive as it is, have a three-edition market? Why does the need exist? Is there a programmatic lapse in many academic training programs? The follow-up question is: do departments of academic surgery exist that do not or cannot provide the fundamental tools, sophisticated mentors, and career opportunities that this text states are so sorely needed by the young people recruited (at both resident and junior faculty levels), and do the departments, despite this defi-

ciency, perceived or ignored, continue to recruit the academic aspirant innocent of the enormous work load a double career entails? The junior surgical scientist also needs some insight into the increasingly difficult task of obtaining continuous funding, especially when into the second and third decades of a research endeavor. Chapter 64, "The clinician with a basic science laboratory," by O. D. Rotstein, addresses the difficulties inherent in a combined clinical-research career and the organization developed at the University of Toronto to deal with them.

This chapter should be required reading not only for academic aspirants but especially for their mentors, section, division, and department chiefs, and deans or vice presidents on whom rest the responsibilities for providing the time, funding, resources, and support services needed by the investigator.

The editors cite the sacrifices inherent in a successful clinical and research career with several expressions of thanks to their spouses, families, staffs, and friends as they, the editors, gave countless hours to the creation of these three editions.

I have one last word. A short essay on the realities of developing a successful clinical practice while simultaneously creating and maintaining a continuously funded surgical research program would be of assistance to the aspiring surgeon scientist.

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### **Angiology in practice**

A. -M. Salmasi, A. Strano; Dordrecht; 1996; Kluwer; 526 pages; \$276.00.

There is certainly no shortage of textbooks for cardiovascular medicine. However, there are only a few books that attempt to expose the entire subject of cardiovascular medicine from the perspectives of angiology, cardiology, and general internal medicine and that consider epidemiologic and theoretical aspects as well. This is precisely what *Angiology in practice* strives to do.

The book is divided into nine parts with a total of 35 chapters that focus on the following topics: general pathophysiologic considerations; diseases of the cerebrovascular system; diseases of the coronary arteries; diseases of the aorta and the arteries of the upper limb; diseases of the arteries of the lower limb; diseases of the renal, celiac, and mesenteric arteries; hypertension; diseases of the venous system; and associated general illnesses and related conditions.

Because of the broad spectrum of topics, one conspicuous consequence noted in each chapter is the concentration that is placed on the fundamentals. This focus on the basics is both a strength and a weakness of the book. The

reader who is seeking a multidisciplinary introduction into angiology in a manageable form will be satisfied by this book. However, the reader who expects detailed information on the theoretical background, the relative importance, the indications, and the limitations of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures and approaches will have to be referred to established standard textbooks.

As expected in any book written by 63 authors, the quality of the contents, the style, and the expressive presentation of the individual chapters varies to some extent. For example, there is a well-written, in both style and content, 27-page introduction to epidemiology that is oriented toward coronary artery disease. As a comparison, there is a 9-page chapter on the investigation of extracranial carotid disease, in which the technical background, the advantages, and the limitations of ultrasound scan diagnostic procedures are not considered, nor is the currently pressing question of the "gold standard" (angiography versus duplex sonography).

While reading the book, the following four conceptual problems were noted: discrepancy in the quality of some chapters, cross-references that were not always done in a consistent fashion, some individual chapters that the publishers did not linguistically edit, and an unstandardized basic reference strategy. Some of the chapters do include an excellent reference section; thus, even when certain topics could only be covered in an outline fashion because of space limitations, the reader still has a complete list of references available. Unfortunately, this remark does not apply to all chapters in this book. The authors include both native and non-native English speakers, which negatively influences how the text flows in certain parts of the book. A thorough editing by the publishers would have been welcome. With this book, the editors have been successful in creating a text that provides an excellent overview that concisely presents almost all relevant questions regarding arterial and venous vascular diseases and that also addresses the most important general internal medicine and epidemiology aspects of angiology. This book is geared primarily towards general physicians and general surgical and medical residents who have an interest in angiology; however, the book cannot be viewed as competition to the current, established textbooks of angiology and vascular surgery but rather as a supplement to these works. The book is easy-to-read and presents even complex facts in an understandable manner. If it were not for the steep price of \$276.00, the book could also be recommended for medical students.

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