Book reviews

**Books Received**


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The increased incidence of spine surgery makes the current publication an appropriate topic for discussion. Recently, this increase in spine surgery has been met with criticism in the popular press as well as in the medical literature; as such, more emphasis has been placed on the evaluation of outcome measures. In *The Failed Spine*, Szpalski and Guzburg thoughtfully analyze factors that may lead to the suboptimal success of spine surgery for different conditions and address the advent of new technology and its inappropriate use.

The decision to proceed with elective spine surgery requires a global assessment of the patient. This assessment is vital to the success of the surgery and the possible positive outcome of the patient. The very first chapter, “Psychosocial factors and surgical outcomes” by Christine Cedrara, addresses this very issue and its relevance to spine surgery. This has been aptly addressed in the case of chronic low-back pain. In the chapter “Yellow flags: psychosocial risk factors,” Gordon Waddell also tries to identify patients who may not benefit from surgical intervention due to psychosocial dysfunction.

In his review of the “Misuse of implants and devices in spinal surgery,” Robert Mulholland discusses the currently accepted view of spine instability especially in degenerative conditions, which has led to a significant increase in the use of instrumentation. The chapter succinctly but critically highlights the popular reasoning behind instrumentation techniques and their use. Mulholland also discusses future treatments such as disc arthroplasty and failures such as that seen with the intradiscal electrothermal therapy procedure.

Other relevant chapters provoke the reader, albeit mostly surgeons, to select more carefully their patients for intervention, analyze their results, and determine the appropriate course for corrective treatment. Chapters such as “Lumbar fusion: looking for failure” and “How important is post-operative infection?” address relevant topics that all spine surgeons encounter in their practices, whereas “A review of epiduroscopy and its results in chronic low back pain” addresses some unchartered territory for the average spine surgeon.

The salient value of this book lies in its authorship: a clear majority of the authors are respected researchers and physicians who practice in Europe. Their perspective on the precise issues that plague spinal surgeons in this country may contribute toward more efficient and successful patient care. This book is relevant to all spine surgeons, neurosurgeons, and medical personnel such as rehabilitation physicians, who are intimately involved in the care of patients with pathological spine conditions. This is a reasonably priced book that a senior-level resident may also find valuable in learning the tools of the neurosurgical trade. We recommend this book to the individual physician involved in managing pathological spine conditions and to libraries at institutions to which patients with spine problems come for treatment.


*The Definitive Neurological Surgery Board Review* by Moore and Psarros is a clearly written, high-yield guide for neurosurgery residents, especially those in their junior years. Neurology residents and others in related fields may also equally benefit from this concise survey of neurosurgery. While the authors intended the text to be a comprehensive review of neurosurgery, the question of whether this has been accomplished is open for debate. By the same token, the word “definitive” in the title may not be fully accurate. Other review books such as *Comprehensive Neurosurgery Board Review* by J. S. Citow and colleagues are

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more thorough and detailed, and provide a more comprehensive review of the material. However, what sets this text apart is the clear and easy-to-understand prose style along with extensive and very high quality pathological and radiological images. Perhaps these full-color images account for this volume’s hefty price as compared with other review texts. Also, while the questions at the end of each chapter are not presented in the neurosurgery board format, their content is representative of the subject matter and level of complexity offered by the board examination. Overall, this book provides a nice introduction to neurosurgery for trainees across all neurological disciplines, but is by no means a comprehensive review for the neurosurgical boards.

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Minimally Invasive Neurosurgery by Proctor and Black highlights the ever-growing, cutting-edge, state-of-the-art technology used in neurosurgery, and its coverage of these topics is notably current. As the title states, this book is a celebration of the advances in minimal invasiveness in neurosurgery. The text is exceptionally thorough in its description of minimally invasive evaluation modalities, such as endoscopy, magnetic resonance (MR) imaging, MR spectroscopy, functional MR imaging, positron emission tomography, magnetoencephalography, electrocortical mapping, and minimally invasive interventional techniques (endovascular surgery, radiofrequency, radiosurgery, thermal therapy, and molecular therapy, among others). This text includes detailed explanations of neuroimaging techniques by providing fundamental concepts in physics in a clear, well-written text. In the second section of the book, topics in minimally invasive surgery are described according to specialty topics: pediatrics, vascular surgery, oncology, and procedures for the spine, peripheral nerves, and traumatic brain injury. This book is reasonably priced for its comprehensive coverage of the material. In short, Minimally Invasive Neurosurgery is a unique and remarkable accomplishment that belongs in every neurosurgical library.

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