NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR LIVER RESECTIONS. Edited by Renzo Dionigi and Juan R. Madariaga. 268 pp. Illust. Karger Landes Systems, Basel, Switzerland. 1997. US$98. ISBN 3-8055-6564-X

Written by Italian doctors in collaboration with American, Japanese and French doctors, all well known in the field of liver surgery, this book comprises 13 chapters covering 5 major topics: surgery, radiology, regeneration, chemotherapy and immunoscintigraphy. Most chapters contain an extensive reference list. The numerous figures, tables and colour plates complement the text well.

The chapter on new devices in liver resections provides an excellent overview on how to achieve hemostasis during liver resection by using various techniques (ultrasonic dissection, ultrasonic cutting, laser or water-jet dissection, and argon-beam coagulation). New approaches to interstitial therapy of hepatic tumours are well described; these include laser hyperthermia, radiofrequency electrodesiccation, interstitial radiotherapy, alcohol injection and cryotherapy.

Antonio Francavilla and colleagues have provided a good general overview of fundamental research and possible clinical implications for those interested in liver regeneration.

The chapter on diagnostic procedures and preoperative liver assessment is short, but the reader can get more detailed information from the references.

The chapter on vascular occlusion during liver resection is excellent. The authors describe the most modern techniques, underlining the advantages and disadvantages of each type of occlusion. They also describe their experience in cirrhotic patients who have liver resection using different types of vascular occlusion.

In addition to chapters on surgical technique, which include resection of the caudate lobe, biliary reconstruction during hepatectomy and living-related liver transplantation, the section on applications of laparoscopy in liver surgery provides a description of the current laparoscopic procedures and indications for laparoscopic liver resection.

The diagnostic and therapeutic benefits of intraoperative ultrasonography are presented logically but briefly.

A very brief chapter on preoperative portal embolization to increase the safety of major hepatectomies for liver tumours is written by a Japanese surgical team and includes their own experience with 54 patients. A very complete chapter dealing with the treatment of hepatocellular carcinoma by arterial chemoembolization describes the technique using chemoembolic materials, as well as the results and pitfalls.

The reader can also find a good review on implantable systems for drug infusion in liver tumours without having much new knowledge on this subject. Finally, the authors have described their experience with radioimmunoguided surgery of the liver in 30 patients with colorectal liver metastasis. It seems to be a promising new adjunctive technique for the surgical treatment of colorectal cancer, but many problems still need to be resolved.

Overall, this book is well written and illustrated, and is easy to read. It will be most appreciated by general surgeons who have experience in liver surgery and fellows in hepatobiliary, pancreatic surgery and liver transplantation. Interventional radiologists and specialists in nuclear medicine can benefit from the chapters related to their practice.

Réal Lapointe, MD
Division of General Surgery
Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery Unit
Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal — Campus St-Luc
Montreal, Que.

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