
Book Reviews

Critiques de livres

BORROWED TIME. A SURGEON'S STRUGGLE WITH TRANSFUSION-INDUCED AIDS. Orville J. Messenger and Dorothy R. Messenger. 153 pp. Mosaic Press, Oakville, Ont. 1995. Price not stated. ISBN 0-88962-582-4

The Messengers have provided a moving account of how they, a young surgeon and his wife, have coped, first with the surgeon's premature coronary artery disease, then with human immunodeficiency virus positivity and finally with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. The source of the virus was traced to a blood transfusion the surgeon received when he underwent aortocoronary bypass in 1985.

I was impressed with the strength of the Messenger's commitment to family and with the importance of the spiritual side of their lives. Their methods of coping with this dreadful disease are exposed in a most forthright manner.

Three issues emerge that complicate their experience: their reluctance to "go public," the surgeon as a patient and the difficulty some doctors have with patients who are physicians. This disease, like few others, has been associated with stigmata that transcend the disease itself. Society and the medical profession have surely progressed in this regard since 1985. Surgeons are notoriously noncompliant patients, and the Messengers provide some humour in this area. The apparent insensitivity of the individual who first notified the surgeon about the results of his HIV test is not an unfamiliar story.

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CANCER OF THE BREAST. 4th edition. Edited by William L. Donegan and John S. Spratt. 860 pp. Illust. W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia; Harcourt Brace & Company Canada, Ltd., Toronto. 1995. \$216. ISBN 0-7216-4694-8

This comprehensive text centres on the clinical management of women with breast cancer. Although it provides the reader with details on breast anatomy, benign breast disorders and adjuvant systemic and radiation therapies, its strength lies in its emphasis on the surgical aspects of diagnosis and treatment. Breast cancer management has changed over the years, and the evolution of surgical decision making, multidisciplinary care and current state-of-the-art practice is summarized in this up-to-date text.

On the surface the book follows a standard format. The first chapters generically describe the anatomy, physiology and benign disorders of the breast but also concentrate on the spectrum of information pertinent to those studying breast cancer. The middle section tells the reader about the disease, from epidemiologic and etiologic viewpoints, detection and diagnosis, through the surgical treatment of the disorder to adjuvant radiation and systemic therapies. The last portion of the book deals with specific management problems and includes nursing care, breast reconstruction and malpractice liability.

However, the chapters could also be grouped into three different categories. The first category comprises the core chapters. They form the backbone of the text and most were written by the editors. The second category includes topics that essentially epitomize the multidisciplinary nature of breast cancer and are essential to current clinical management.

These chapters include breast imaging, radiotherapy, chemotherapy and endocrine therapy of breast cancer. Nursing care, psychosocial factors and breast reconstruction also fall into this category. Interspersed through the book, forming a third category are "specialty chapters," based on such topics as breast cancer cell kinetics and statistical methods. They make the book unique since they include some topics that have not been included in other texts. Yet the reader uninterested in their minutiae could easily skip these chapters without prejudice to the flow and understanding of the book.

The core chapters reflect the surgical expertise of the editors with clear text, embellished with appropriate charts and tables to illustrate the major truths and controversies. They have included their own substantial personal experience as well as the significant randomized trials that are pertinent in clinical decision making. In the section on surgical treatment of early (stages I and II) invasive carcinoma, the authors describe, in historical order, radical, extended radical, modified radical and simple mastectomies, and finally breast-conserving operations. I suggest, however, that by leaving breast-conserving operations to the end, the authors make a subtle, but incorrect, suggestion that extensive extirpative surgery may provide better surgical results than breast conservation. If the breast-conservation section were to be discussed first, the reader would get the impression that in most cases, breast conservation is preferable, not just to be undertaken if the patient declines modified radical mastectomy. Furthermore, descriptions of radical and extended radical mastectomies should be left to the end since they are now rarely performed.

Two specialty chapters deserve mention. The chapter on breast-cancer growth rates is an excellent reference for those who must research this topic. It includes much of the world's literature on this topic. Some aspects are only for the mathematically inclined reader, but both the science and the practicalities are well documented and described.

The chapter by Leslie Hughes is extremely interesting and thought-provoking. It stimulates the reader to think about benign breast disorders as part of the natural progression of the breast through a woman's life and suggests that many of the conditions that we tend to treat as diseases can be normal events in the breast life cycle.

This is an excellent textbook that focuses on the clinical management of patients with benign and, especially, malignant disorders of the breast. It has sufficient detail to be an important reference for those with special interest in breast diseases, but it is also readable, with substantial but general overviews of important topics. Many chapters provide a unique source of information and authoritative detail. General surgeons, oncologists with an interest in breast diseases, family physicians, and medical and radiation oncologists will all find this book valuable. It will be an asset to any general medical library and will serve as an excellent entry point for students wishing to research specific topics in breast cancer. The authors are to be congratulated for their work and for their dedication to the surgical advancement and treatment of women with breast cancer.

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GASTROINTESTINAL CANCERS: BIOLOGY, DIAGNOSIS, AND THERAPY. Edited by Anil K. Rustgi. 663 pp. Illust. Lippincott-Raven Publishers, Philadelphia. 1995. \$169 (US). ISBN 0-7817-02763 (order code 2835)

The editor states that this book is intended as a primary resource for physicians, scientists, medical students and allied health personnel in the disciplines of gastroenterology, medical oncology, surgical oncology, radiation oncology, pathology and cancer biology and as a reference for those already involved in the theory and practice of gastrointestinal cancers.

The first section of the book deals with the biologic aspects of the gastrointestinal tract. It includes chapters on embryology, growth factors and oncogenes. The following six sections deal with gastrointestinal malignant disease in an organ-specific manner, with most sections including chapters on clinical, pathologic and biologic features, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, and surgery. The section on colorectal cancer also includes chapters on polyposis syndromes and hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer, dysplasia and chronic ulcerative colitis, and molecular genetics. The book finishes with a section on future perspectives; this section covers the areas of molecular diagnosis and gene therapy, and provides a review of tumour immunology and immunotherapy.

This book succeeds in bringing together up-to-date multidisciplinary information on the major gastrointestinal cancers. Results of important clinical trials are summarized. The bibliography for each chapter is extensive and relevant.

From a clinical aspect this book is not encyclopedic. For example, anal carcinoma is dealt with very briefly in the section on colorectal cancer. The text is particularly strong with respect to the biologic features of gastrointesti-

nal cancer and should serve as a valuable *mise à jour* for practising physicians of any specialty who deal with gastrointestinal cancer. I particularly enjoyed the information on molecular biology, genetics and immunology.

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VASCULAR IMAGING FOR SURGEONS. Edited by R.M. Greenhalgh. 531 pp. Illust. W.B. Saunders Company, London; W.B. Saunders Company, Canada Ltd., Toronto. 1995. \$234. ISBN 0-7020-2015-X

As a radiologist who has participated with enthusiasm in the development of vascular imaging and intervention over the past 10 years, I was dismayed to see the relatively small input of radiologist contributors in this attractive text. Most contributing authors are surgeons, and the majority of these are from the United Kingdom and Europe. In fact, in the preface to his book, Dr. Greenhalgh mentions only the vascular technologist as "an entity alongside the vascular surgeon [who] has emerged as a natural partner!" Perhaps practice patterns are different in Europe, but in North America there is certainly a healthy working relationship between vascular surgeons and vascular interventional radiologists. I do not believe that many gastrointestinal radiologists would venture to write a text on hepatobiliary surgery for radiologists without a significant contribution from their surgical colleagues!

This is an easily read text with excellent illustrations. The organization appears somewhat haphazard: in the