

lent addition to any medical student's library. Indeed, many general practitioners will find this book of value, particularly in its discussions of investigative techniques and reasonable treatments.

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REVIEW OF SURGERY. 2nd edition. David C. Sabiston, Jr. 268 pp. W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia; Harcourt Brace & Co. Canada, Ltd., Toronto. 1997. Can\$50.95. ISBN 0-7216-8671-0

This review is intended to supplement *Sabiston's Textbook of Surgery. The Biological Basis of Modern Surgical Practice* (15th edition) and is divided into subject areas roughly corresponding to the chapters in the textbook. The review comprises a series of multiple-choice questions. Each one is followed by a different number of choices (usually 3 to 5), and 1 or more may be correct. This format differs from that of most examinations and greater consistency in the structure of the questions and number of correct answers would have improved it.

The multiple choices are followed by a brief explanation and the correct answer(s). To reproduce the examination environment, these explanations would have been better placed at the back of the book.

Having a review book to supplement a textbook is useful, particularly to those preparing for an examination, such as medical students, residents and practising surgeons preparing for recertification. The discussions are generally clear and are supported by

reference to the page(s) in the textbook where the material can be reviewed.

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TEXTBOOK OF SURGERY. THE BIOLOGICAL BASIS OF MODERN SURGICAL PRACTICE.

15th edition. David C. Sabiston, Jr. and H. Kim Lyerly. 2318 pp. Illust. W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia; Harcourt Brace & Co. Canada, Ltd., Toronto. 1997. Can\$160. ISBN 0-7216-5887-3

This is the latest reincarnation of one of the standard surgical texts. It is a comprehensive textbook of surgery and a substantial update to the 14th edition published in 1992.

Like many surgical textbooks it is divided into sections on the physiologic basis for the management of surgical problems, followed by chapters detailing surgical problems organized around organ systems. Since the previous edition, 6 chapters have been added, encompassing molecular biology, clinical outcomes, laparoscopy, plastic and maxillofacial surgery, surgical management of pulmonary emphysema, and mesothelioma. The first 3 of these new chapters deserve special mention. The chapter on molecular biology succinctly reviews the basic concepts and research tools used in this rapidly growing field. Furthermore, the authors cover clinical applications for diagnosis and therapy that are of interest to surgeons. It is important for all surgeons to be conversant with molecular biology and its relevance to clinical surgery, and this chapter succeeds well in that regard.

The excellent chapter on clinical outcomes in surgery is mandatory reading for all surgeons. It introduces and defines the important vocabulary and provides a detailed review of the variety of research approaches, including clinical examples related to surgery. It is well written, illustrating its points clearly with examples from the surgical literature. After reading this chapter the reader will be better able to assess the data presented in the surgical literature. The chapter also emphasizes the need for surgeons to look at nontraditional measures of outcome, such as quality of life and the economic impact of surgical care.

The section on laparoscopy provides basic information on the tools needed and covers in detail the physiologic effects of laparoscopic compared with traditional open surgery. Complications of the laparoscopic approach are covered briefly, but extensive references have been provided. The authors summarize the currently practised laparoscopic procedures that have not yet been accepted as standard care.

The other chapters have been substantially revised and updated. Many are followed not only by numerous references but by a list of suggested readings and a brief description of the significance of these. The text is supplemented with a large number of clear line drawings and black-and-white photographs.

Sabiston has attracted a group of well-known experts to write the chapters, and most of the book is written with the authority of someone who is knowledgeable and experienced in the field. At times, as in the chapter on breast diseases, many treatment alternatives are covered without a clear synthesis and adequate interpretation of the information. This may confuse the less experienced reader, such as a medical student or a junior resident.

Overall, this is an excellent refer-