
Book Reviews

Critiques de livres

INTRAOPERATIVE IRRADIATION. TECHNIQUES AND RESULTS. Edited by Leonard L. Gundersen, Christopher G. Willet, Louis B. Harrison and Felipe A. Calvo. 550 pp. Illust. Humana Press, Totowa, NJ. 1999. US\$195. ISBN0-896-03523-9

This comprehensive review by internationally recognized radiation oncologists, surgeons and scientists likely represents the definitive text on intraoperative irradiation and allied techniques. The 4 editors and 75 contributors are from the United States and Europe; none are Canadian.

The book contains 29 chapters divided into 5 parts: general rationale, techniques and methods, normal tissue tolerances, disease site, and organ-specific results and conclusions. The text is extremely well referenced, with numerous diagrams and tables. Given the complex nature of the material I would have appreciated some editorial comment at the end of each chapter.

The reader needs to appreciate that across Canada there is no single intraoperative radiotherapy system. Although the resource-intensive nature of an intraoperative radiation source is certainly a contributing factor, in large part the reason for the absence of a single system is the lack of randomized controlled data (comparing standardized therapies with intraoperative irradiation), which, if positive, would mandate the acquisition of intraoperative irradiation machines as the standard of care for various malignant conditions. Despite this, the book remains a useful reference for the dedicated multidisciplinary oncology team, wishing to have a comprehensive review of these techniques (and current results), which are available in only a very few selected North American and European centres.

In addition, it is important for the reader to appreciate the differences between intraoperative radiotherapy and brachytherapy techniques. In the lat-

ter, which is almost universally available in Canadian radiation oncology centres, hollow needles can be placed in various sites such as the esophagus, prostate, retroperitoneum, head and neck and limb, after which the radiation source is introduced into the affected area. Patients then receive a measured radiation dose for a period ranging from a few hours to a few days, providing a greater dose intensity than is possible by standard external beam techniques. With the intraoperative irradiation technique, high-dose radiation is applied in the operating room directly to the tumour bed once the tumour has been removed, generally in a one-time dose rather than in multiple doses as with external beam radiotherapy. Thus, very high doses of radiation can be applied to a small area with a much reduced risk of damaging surrounding tissues. The biophysics of a single high dose versus multiple small doses is well covered in the text.

This book left me with a sense of rivalry between the major United States centres providing this service with often very encouraging, but presumably biased, results.

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THE SURGERY OF CHILDHOOD TUMORS.

Edited by Robert Carachi, Amir F. Azmy and Jay L. Grosfeld. 495 pp. Illust. Arnold, London, UK; Oxford University Press Canada, Toronto. 1999. Can\$432. ISBN 0-340-69269-3

Very few textbooks are devoted exclusively to the rapidly developing field of pediatric surgical oncology, so this additional reference work

is welcome. This comprehensive textbook is different from previous works because of the international flavour brought by the 30 contributors from Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States who are all respected world experts in their field. This international contribution is the strength of the book. It stands out as providing the up-to-date worldwide treatment options for cancer in childhood. Protocols and approaches from both the European and North American schools are discussed at length.

The book consists of 3 sections. The first covers the epidemiology of cancer, tumour biology and cytogenetics, tumour markers, imaging, general pathological features, and chemotherapy, radiotherapy and immunotherapy. A good overview of the worldwide epidemiologic characteristics of childhood cancer is provided in the first chapter. A chapter on genetic counselling provides a clear, concise, easy-to-read summary, which is helpful to all clinicians who treat children with cancer. Too much information is included, in my opinion, on screening for tumours, which makes it difficult to determine the role and usefulness of markers for diagnosis and prognosis. The chapter on tumour pathology is well illustrated and provides an excellent synopsis. Overall, this section on the scientific basis of tumours is well documented and easily understood by all clinicians.

The second part includes 7 chapters covering tumours encountered in the neonatal period, neuroblastoma and nephroblastoma, liver tumours, malignant germ-cell tumours, soft-tissue sarcoma and lymphoma. The chapters on Wilms' tumours and neuroblastomas are excellent and extremely well referenced. However, the section on other adrenal tumours could have been more comprehensive. Malignant germ-cell tumours are commonly encountered in busy pedi-

atric surgical services, and this subject could have been covered in more depth. This chapter was the most disappointing for me. The up-to-date treatment of lymphoma was well described, especially the role of surgery.

The next section contains chapters on bone tumours and limb salvage, head and neck tumours, brain and thoracic tumours. Also included in this section are chapters on rare tumours, reconstructive surgery and surgical complications. Finally, counselling and supportive care are discussed. A useful international list of parents' associations and support groups closes the book.

The book is well illustrated with multiple colour figures that are pertinent to the text. Another strength of the book is the coverage of technical details of surgical procedures. Moreover every chapter is extensively referenced.

Like all pediatric surgical texts this one is expensive, and this probably constitutes the only serious drawback to the purchase of this book. Some typographical errors have slipped by and I did find a few minor mistakes, but these are probably explained by the fact that this is a first edition and the errors will likely be corrected in any subsequent edition.

I recommend this book to all clinicians who treat children with tumours. It provides a global and detailed view of the treatment of childhood cancers that will be useful to all members of a multidisciplinary team caring for such children.

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VASCULAR DISORDERS OF THE UPPER EXTREMITY. 3rd revised edition. Edited by Herbert I. Machleder. 515 pp. Illust. Futura Publishing Company, Inc., Armonk, NY. 1998. US\$98. ISBN 0-87993-409-3

Vascular disorders of the upper extremity are much less common than those of the lower extremity. It is therefore more difficult for the vascular surgeon to gain an equivalent level of experience and expertise in the treatment of patients with upper extremity disorders. This book is a multi-authored text edited by a vascular surgeon who has extensive experience with the management of upper extremity disorders. Thankfully, he is also the author of 7 of the 18 chapters in the book. His experience is evident in what he writes, and that translates into well-written, readable chapters.

The book is quite logically divided into 4 separate parts. The first is devoted to the vascular evaluation and includes 3 chapters describing the essentials of the physical examination, noninvasive vascular assessment and angiography for upper extremity vascular problems.

The second part of the book includes 9 chapters devoted to the "cumulative trauma disorders" (thoracic outlet syndrome). I think it is appropriate that, although the title of the book is *Vascular Disorders of the Upper Extremity*, 5 of the chapters in this section are related more specifically to the essentials of diagnosis and management of neurogenic thoracic outlet syndrome, repetitive motion disorders of the upper extremity and management of neuropathic pain. For the clinician, a major problem in the management of patients having upper extremity disorders is indeed distinguishing between neurogenic and vascular problems, and a review of these chapters would be useful. The remaining chapters in this section cover the treatment of arterial and venous thoracic outlet syndrome and various diagnostic techniques, such as the electrophysiological evaluation and the use of somatosensory evoked potentials. These chapters on diagnostic techniques are quite technical and therefore difficult to read; however, they do

serve as good sources of reference and illustrate the strengths and limitations of these diagnostic techniques.

The third part of the text is devoted to intrinsic and acquired disorders of the upper extremities and includes a well-written chapter on the evaluation and management of patients with Raynaud's syndrome, a chapter on the management of patients with axillo-subclavian and brachial artery disorders, and a chapter on the very complex topic of hemangiomas and arteriovenous malformations of the upper extremity. I found these chapters well organized, well referenced and containing ample illustrations and sample arteriograms of these complex lesions. There is a useful chapter discussing the complications of vascular access procedures in the upper extremity, which would provide a useful review for any practising surgeon who performs these procedures.

The last section involves a detailed discussion of upper extremity manifestations of systemic vascular disorders, namely vasculitis. This chapter is exhaustively referenced and contains well-constructed tables and classification systems. Although to most practising physicians the topic of vasculitis tends to be quite confusing, this chapter serves as an excellent reference source.

In summary, I believe this book would be of interest to the vascular surgeon, general surgeon and trainee in surgery. It serves as a useful review of various issues on the management of these often complex vascular problems. It would be a good book to have on hand for most practising physicians who encounter patients with upper extremity vascular disorders.

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