

organized by body systems and organs. All surgical specialties are represented, although the 30- to 40-page chapters offer only superficial coverage of the topics. Changes to this edition include an update of all material and 2 new chapters: "Oncology" and "Power Sources in the Operating Room."

The biggest strength of this textbook is its simple organizational structure. Opening the book to any page will reveal many levels of headings to keep the reader focused. There is an extensive index for easy reference to any topic. Finally, there is an impressive number of tables and figures, particularly given the space limitations of the book. While practising surgeons will likely find the material not sufficiently comprehensive, students and residents will appreciate the brevity and perhaps will appreciate even more the reasonable price that the brevity allows.

The text's greatest weakness is one that plagues most reference books, particularly in surgical specialties: the paucity of evidence presented relative to the recommendations. Despite the recent advancement of evidence-based surgery and the increasing publication of high-quality surgical trials and systematic reviews, most references presented in this text are narrative review articles and case series. Thus, most of the recommendations provided are based primarily on the authors' experiences, with little evidence to support them. This textbook would have been strengthened had it included a chapter dedicated to the practice and conduct of evidence-based surgery.

In summary, the 12th edition of *Current surgical diagnosis & treatment* is marginally improved from the popular 11th edition. It remains an excellent source of

topic overviews, primarily directed at medical students and surgical residents. Hopefully, future editions of this and other classic surgical textbooks will incorporate more systematic, peer-reviewed evidence to allow surgeons to grade the strength of the recommendations.

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CURRENT CONSULT SURGERY, 1ST EDITION. G.M. Doherty, editor. New York: Lange Medical Books/McGraw-Hill; 2006. 765 pages. CDN \$79.95. ISBN 0071423133

This book is designed to be a quick reference guide when time to seek out results is limited. It has a novel approach, dividing the book into 3 separate sections: 1) diagnostic index, which groups disease topics by signs, symptoms, and patient presentations; 2) diagnosis and treatment, an alphabetically organized 2-page review of disease topics and conditions; and 3) cancer staging tables, which display American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) staging information tables on topics discussed in the book.

The book is a straightforward read and covers most topics relevant to senior medical students and surgical residents. Although brief, the 2-page reviews of each topic include salient points and provide current references for more complete reading, if needed. The AJCC staging tables are a useful adjunct to help prepare for the ambulatory setting and

academic rounds. The book's content is reasonably comprehensive but not fully up-to-date, as demonstrated in the rectal carcinoma section, which has no mention of neoadjuvant chemoradiotherapy. There was significant repetition, with topics, such as carcinoid tumours, being discussed more than once, and the book lacks in operative detail, with no discussion of intraoperative controversies or decisions. A discussion of these details would help surgical residents with the challenge to collate and synthesize information and assess clinical relevance.

Regarding format, the first section comprises lists of what appear to be endless signs or symptoms, with little clinical relevance.

In summary, the text has a unique concept for providing information in a systematic and organized fashion. If it is being marketed as a textbook, it is lacking in detail and does not provide adequate discussion of intraoperative or operative detail. Its format is best suited to a handbook, where it could be used as a quick reference for some brief detail. Unfortunately, because of its large size and lack of portability, it is not functional as a quick reference handbook. In conclusion, this book is best designed for senior medical students and surgical interns. It is not an ideal text for senior residents preparing for examinations, unless it's used as an adjunct to more formal texts and readings.

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