

Lumenta CB, Di Rocco C, Haase J, Mooij JJA (eds): Neurosurgery (European manual of medicine)

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This textbook was written for European residents and interested specialized clinicians to provide the core knowledge required for working in their speciality in the entire European Union. It is therefore not surprising to find at the beginning chapters about training, operative logbook and learning “surgical skills,” prior to the basics and the main part dedicated to cranial neurosurgery.

In this review for spine surgeons, the focus is on the hundred pages dedicated to spine, which are preceded by a section about developmental and acquired anomalies including the cranio-vertebral junction: Chiari malformation, basilar impression, aplasia or hypoplasia of the dens. Some case examples are shown with illustrative drawings, radiographs, and CT scans with reconstruction, and some techniques for C0–C2 stabilization are presented. The reader finds next a chapter about movement rehabilitation, including gait and balance trainer, and a very short mention of electric stimulation.

The spine section begins with a basic chapter without illustrations, a summary of anatomy, pathophysiology, clinical symptomatology and examination methods. Spinal tumors are discussed, and some examples needing an additional stabilization procedures are shown, with a special accent on specific aspects of spinal tumors in children.

The chapter about degenerative diseases reviews cervical disc herniations, stenosis, OPLL and cervical myelopathy, including rheumatoid arthritis and thoracic pathologies. The low back pain discussion is short, as the one about conservative and surgical treatment options for lumbar disc herniations, stenosis, spondylolisthesis and juxtafacet cysts. There is no special discussion of the controversial subject called “degenerative instability” and no special emphasis on more “orthopedic” stabilization procedures.

Spinal vascular diseases as angiomas, dural AVMs and perimedullary fistulas are briefly explained, as well as infectious diseases, with some MRI case examples.

The section about spinal trauma, split into cervical and thoraco-lumbar spine, is well illustrated. It includes drawings explaining injury mechanism and the different classifications, pre- and postoperative imaging and a final comment about controversies around the treatment of acute spinal cord injuries. It is followed by a discussion about syringomyelia, and treatment and rehabilitation after a spinal cord lesion.

The next part of this textbook is dedicated to peripheral nerves, including neurophysiology, and brachial and lower pelvic plexus. This, with the part dedicated to peripheral nerve tumors and a summary about the autonomic nervous system, is also relevant for spine surgeons.

It is a valuable textbook for students and residents in training and for physicians interested in Neurosurgery. It is not a spine surgery textbook: instrumentation is briefly shown, when appropriate, but no mobile or semi-rigid, dynamic implants, no disc prostheses, no upright, functional or kinetic MRI in the imaging section. These new technologies have, however, not yet reached the status of “gold standard”.

Conflict of interest None.

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