



Kim J. Burchiel: Handbook of pain surgery

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The *Handbook of Pain Surgery* is viewed by its editor, Dr. Kim Burchiel, as an abbreviated highlight of his encyclopedic reference book, *Surgical Management of Pain*, allowing for broader dissemination and easy access to this topic.

It must be remembered that, since the days of White and Sweet, invasive pain management had been slipping out of the purview of neurosurgeons into other specialties with a far greater number of practitioners. The new century has seen a resurgence of the neurosurgeon's role in pain therapy with the reexamination of interventions based on a better understanding of pain pathophysiology and an evidence-based outcome approach.

The book is in a convenient, compact paperback format. Following a brief section on the approach to the chronic pain patient and anesthetic techniques, the book is divided into 5 sections with 23 chapters covering spinal cord and peripheral nerve stimulation, intrathecal therapy, procedures for craniofacial pain, and ablative procedures. In each chapter, the relevant experts describe the indications for their technique, illustrate their approach and point out relevant pitfalls. The reference lists are substantial and comprehensive. Dr. Burchiel provides a valuable editor's comment at the end of each

chapter, critically analyzing the validity of the technique and what is needed to strengthen its applicability for future practice. Five chapters have appended videos that readily spring to life when pointing one's smartphone at the web code picture. The videos include among others a valuable depiction of Kanpolat's percutaneous CT-guided trigeminal tractotomy, Sindou's DREZ procedure, and nervus intermedius section.

The book emphasizes commonly practiced surgical procedures in treating pain, though there are some omissions, such as motor cortex stimulation. This format is not symptom oriented and makes it difficult for the practitioner to find the ideal treatment algorithm in approaching the patient with a specific pain problem such as failed back syndrome or truncal post herpetic neuralgia. Despite this caveat, the Handbook will prove a valuable resource for the younger neurosurgeon in gaining familiarity with the possibilities of surgical relief in pain sufferers. Neurosurgeons dealing with pain patients can find detailed reminders of uncommon but effective procedures. With its affordable price and the convenient, compact format, it should be a popular companion to the neurosurgical community.

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