



## Cervical trauma: surgical management editor Robert F. Heary (2019) 288 pp., 260 illustrations, Hardback, ISBN: 9781626238534 Thieme Publishers New York/Stuttgart. 2019

Niklas Marklund<sup>1</sup>

Received: 6 April 2020 / Accepted: 7 April 2020 / Published online: 5 May 2020  
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Knowledge on cervical spine injuries is crucial for any neurosurgeon dealing with spinal disorders and trauma. Thus, I read with great interest this volume, edited by an experienced surgeon active in spinal pathology and spinal cord injury (SCI). Over these 204 pages, there are 26 rather condensed chapters, 3–15 pages long, that are richly illustrated and with a good mix of figures and short subsections. Each chapter starts with a condensed abstract. While these abstracts introduce the reader to the chapter, they are often too short to provide conclusive take-home messages. This volume lists 70 contributors, all from North America, which should be considered in view of the regional differences that often persist in the area of spinal pathologies and trauma.

Initially, there are nicely designed overviews on the cervical anatomy and the pathophysiology and classification of SCI. There is also a rather comprehensive coverage of disease-specific strategies, and I particularly liked the pediatric sections. Vertebral artery injuries and their medical and endovascular management are also clearly presented. Moreover, an important topic that is less covered in other publications is the consideration of the injured athlete and return-to-play issues. There is some redundancy and repetition of information, such as the SLIC classification tables that are found in two chapters, and I identified some errors in the numbering of figures in one chapter. Most chapters, while condensed, are well-planned and easy to read. Often, much information was outlined in a limited text yet providing an adequate number of references. I found the texts on the complex upper cervical spine injuries—such as the atlanto-

occipital injuries, odontoid, and hangman's fractures—to be nicely covered. Overall, on the positive side, this book provides a relevant overview over a range of topics related to cervical injuries.

However, there are also some limitations. The controversies regarding the use of hard collars in the prehospital setting were not covered. Some information on indications for emergent clearing, or imaging, of the cervical spine using, e.g., the NEXUS criteria, could have been included. I particularly missed a summary and thorough guidance on the concept and assessment of cervical stability (and instability). While some features were mentioned when specific disorders were discussed, a dedicated paragraph would have been welcome in view of the paramount importance in the choice between surgery or conservative management. Furthermore, while congenital spinal stenosis, ossification of the posterior longitudinal ligament (OPLL), and rheumatoid arthritis were addressed, the clinical relevance and management difficulties of fractures and SCI in patients with ankylosing spondylitis were not. Above all, I did not find this per se to be a surgically focused volume. While much overall knowledge of relevance for the clinician/neurosurgeon is provided, information on patient positioning, surgical approaches/strategies, and overall surgical techniques including intraoperative aids such as neuronavigation and O-arms, is rather scarce.

In summary, while there are room for some improvement should future editions be planned, I found this well-designed and readable publication to be of interest to neurosurgeons dealing with cervical spine injuries.

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✉ Niklas Marklund  
niklas.marklund@neurokir.uu.se

<sup>1</sup> Department of Clinical Sciences Lund, Neurosurgery, Skane University Hospital, Lund University, Lund, Sweden