

ADVANCES AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS IN NEUROSURGERY. VOLUME 32. 2007. Edited by J.D. Pickard, N. Akalan, C. Di Rocco, V.V. Dolenc, J. Lobo Antunes, J.J.A. Mooij, J. Schramm, M. Sindou. Published by Springer Wien New York. 267 pages. Price C\$200 approx.

This is the 32nd volume of a popular series of monographs which has been published annually since 1974. Attractive features include the slim volume size, diversity of subjects and thorough approach to each topic. Sponsored by the European Association of Neurosurgical Societies, its editorship is derived mostly from western Europe. The authors are from France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Denmark and Turkey. Topics include, under Advances, the transition from child to adult in neurosurgery, conflicts of interest in medical practice, and neurosurgical treatment of perineal neuralgias. Under Technical Standards, topics include spinal cord stimulation for ischemic heart disease and peripheral vascular disease, surgical anatomy of the petrous apex and petroclival region, percutaneous cordotomy and related techniques for pain, and a comprehensive review of carpal tunnel syndrome.

The chapter concerning the transition from child to adult in neurosurgery is timely. There is little published work on this subject. The authors contend that the worst approach is to simply transfer care from pediatric to adult neurosurgery, a common practice. They advance the concept that pediatric neurosurgeons should be fully or at least jointly involved in long-term care throughout the adult years. Close to two-thirds of hydrocephalus patients are unemployed during adult life, and capacity for social integration is diminished. Identifying such long-term sequelae may influence treatment decisions during childhood. The authors also suggest that pediatric neurosurgeons are more capable than their adult counterparts of coordinating care for adult myelomeningocele patients, and operating on tethered cord patients in adulthood.

The chapter on conflict of interest highlights the diverse types of such conflicts, and emphasizes that these are individual occurrences rather than a kind of systemic behaviour. The chapter on the neurosurgical treatment of perineal neuralgias is thorough and contains good anatomical figures. In the chapter on spinal cord stimulation the authors pose two provocative questions: how is it so poorly known that neuromodulation can be a valuable treatment for angina pectoris and chronic back / leg pain? And why are so few neurosurgeons interested in it?

The section on surgical anatomy is primarily devoted to the lateral approaches to the petroclival region. There are beautiful anatomical figures which will interest skull base surgeons, those who treat trigeminal neuralgia, and those who embolize the petrosal artery. These are integrated well with the details of the approach. Surgical results are shown by example but not detailed statistically. The authors do not detail the newer endoscopic approaches, and rather dismiss the anterior transmaxillary and various cisternal approaches. Their comment that "direct temporal lobe retraction and venous problems constitute serious limitations" of the subtemporal approach suggests little understanding of the use and importance of spinal CSF drainage for such surgery. There is also little time spent on the transcrural and related approaches developed on this continent by al-Mefty and the Delashaw group.

The chapter on percutaneous ablative pain procedures is good but suffers from the inherent bias of single surgeon authorship. Detailed experience and results are provided, with over 200 cordotomies for example, but without pain scales or comparison with more conservative approaches.

The chapter on carpal tunnel syndrome is very comprehensive at 70 pages in length. It was good to be reminded of the neurosurgeon's role in such conditions, a role which has diminished at some centres as plastic and orthopedic surgeons have assumed increased roles with the advent of dedicated hand surgery units and endoscopic techniques. The author provides the wisdom derived from his 40 years' experience and over 130 references on the subject covering history, anatomy, diagnosis, treatment and complications and their avoidance. The sections on clinical presentation, MRI, and the comparison of open and endoscopic techniques are good. The writing is refreshingly blunt but at times suffers from poor sentence structure and almost comical errors of translation (e.g. "small talking"). This is unfortunate considering that the editors pay special attention to the recognition of English as the official language for European scientific communication.

Overall this compact volume is a welcome addition to the series, and is highly recommended for neurosurgical trainees and the general neurosurgeon's library. The series will also be of use to subspecialty neurosurgeons in the areas mentioned.

*Stephen P. Lownie
London, Ontario*