

Textbook of Otorhinolaryngology— Head and Neck Surgery A Competency-Based Approach for Undergraduates

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There is many a textbook carrying such a title, so the subtitle is fundamental in establishing any novelty. ‘Undergraduate’ I take to mean medical students, but it did strike me immediately that any such trainee who can recite the TNM Classification, grade a subglottic stenosis or even recognise, let alone interpret, an electrocochleogram is a rarity and certainly not typical of those who pass through our medical schools (who emerge almost totally untrained in any ENT whatsoever).

The subtitle also specifies ‘A Competency-Based Approach’, something that is very topical in India, and it is to readers in that country that this content is very much addressed. There is many a reference to national programmes, institutions and local practice as a result. The competency-based educational curriculum in India proves to be very well documented online and I learnt much there about its progressive introduction since 2016. It does, however, seem largely aimed at post-graduate education in ENT and at those heading for the Master of Surgery examination. There is a competency mapping chart occupying more than four pages near the start of this book and every chapter links to and specifies the competencies to be addressed. I would have welcomed some coverage of the underlying ethos and principles behind this approach in the Introduction, however self-evident.

Whatever its target audience, this is a very well-presented book, with colour photography and diagrams on every page. It is ideal for dipping into as a reference, but it is no pocket-book, even with a soft cover. Boxed text is labelled as ‘Points to Ponder’ or ‘Pearls’ and each chapter closes with an ‘Endnote’ section, usually offering some historical insight. ‘Case-based Questions’ and ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ close most chapters but, again, it would be a rare UK undergraduate who could answer ‘What is the importance of the Onodi air cell?’ or ‘What is Samter’s triad?’ . There is a

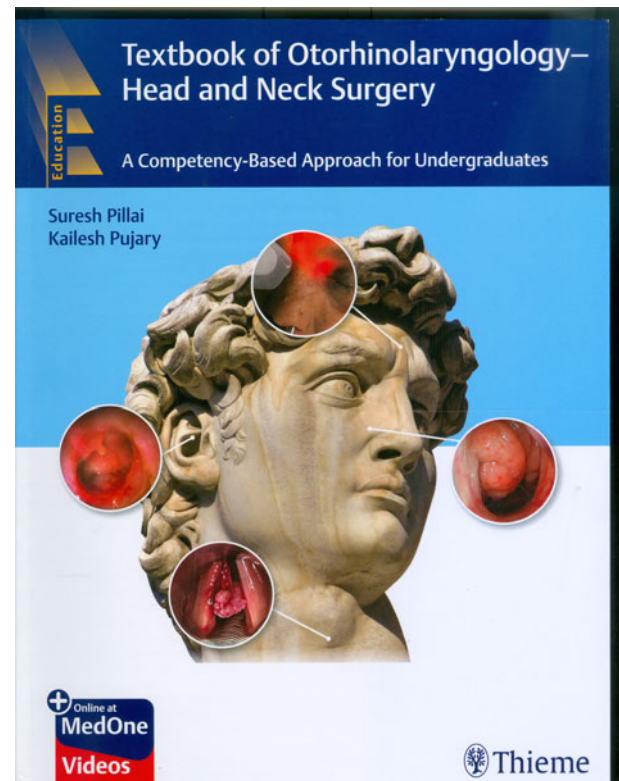


table listing eight eponymous syndromes that involve the vagus nerve, of which this reviewer could only recognise a single one.

This then is a large paperback and excellent value for money (especially at the reduced price quoted on Amazon at the time of writing this review), but I think it is more appropriately targeted at what we used to call junior doctors, but are now known as ‘doctors in training’ and it carries a very useful post-graduate content. Of course, I am assuming that medical students in India emerge from their training schools as ignorant of our subject as do their UK peers. If this is truly an undergraduate curriculum, then it is very impressive indeed.

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