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Advances and Technical Standards in Neurosurgery. Volume 27

J. D. Pickard, editor-in-chief. V. V. Dolenc, J. Lobo Antunes, H. J. Reulen, M. Sindou, A. J. Strong, N. de Tribolet, C. A. F. Tulleken and M. Vapalathi. Vienna: Springer-Verlag; 2002. 244 pages, 97 illustrations.

This multiauthored textbook is an addition to the European postgraduate training series of books for young neurosurgeons first published in 1974. The intent of this volume is to present related areas of neurosurgery in which important recent advances have been made.

The book is divided into two parts: 1) advances in neurosurgery and 2) technical standards in neurosurgery. Part 1 includes topics on the neurobiology of the epileptogenesis in the temporal lobe, diffuse axonal injury after head trauma, and multimodal monitoring of acute brain injury. Part 2 discusses advances in technical standards in neurosurgery, including endoscopy, endonasal transsphenoidal surgery, extracranial vertebral artery anatomy and surgery, and neurosurgical management of pineal tumors.

Chapter 2 presents a significant amount of basic anatomy and physiology of epileptogenesis. Chapter 3 is also significant—again focusing on the anatomy and the pathophysiology of diffuse axonal injury, with a short discussion of clinical aspects, including promising new agents such as magnesium, hypothermia, and cyclosporin-A. Complementing this chapter is a comprehensive review of the various modalities for monitoring acute brain injury.

The last section of the book deals with advances in neurosurgical techniques and is written by experts in their respective fields and is nicely highlighted by a multitude of both black and white and color images.

Although this book serves as an update for both the training and experienced neurosurgeon, the various chapters covered do not necessarily flow from one to another in a cohesive manner. The relationship between endoscopic transsphenoidal surgery and management of the extracranial vertebral artery disease are at best distantly related areas of expertise in neurosurgery. Throughout the text, there is relatively little attention paid to imaging aspects in the topics covered and would potentially have less interest for neuroradiologists.

Although the title of the work emphasizes “advances” and “technical standards,” the chapters on the vertebral artery and pineal region focus more on basic anatomy and surgical approaches. The chapter on endoscopy, however, truly represents a new and evolving technique in neurosurgery.

In summary, there may be some interest for neuroradiologists in reviewing this textbook, but it is not a required text for the office bookcase.