

The Book Forum

Surgery

Practice of Surgery: Current Review, vol 1, by Walter F. Ballinger and Theodore Drapanas, 321 pp, 140 illus, \$23.50, C. V. Mosby Co., 1972.

This epitomization, paring down more than 1,100 recent references, will appeal to all practicing surgeons. The diversity of scope ranges from a chapter that organizes the poly-hormonal syndromes and multiple endocrine adenomatoses into abnormalities of a single (neuroectodermal) cell system, to a well-documented review of emergency medical transportation.

Throughout, lucid illustrations depict the essence of surgical technique. The chapter on hiatus hernia presents a straightforward surgical approach to specific problems. The chapter on tumor immunology provides both documentation and speculation about the clinical relevance of tumor-specific antigens. Most gratifyingly, this chapter and the one on advances in transplantation do not lose the reader. The way that humoral antibodies can either cause rejection or mediate immunosuppression, or the reasons why incompatible grafts frequently succeed, receive excellent coverage.

The author of the superb chapter on thoracic deformities, states that "pectus" means "breast," (assuming with most Americans that "breast" must mean "mammary gland,") and thus thinks that "pectus excavatum" should be renamed "depression deformity." Turning to the "real breast," the effectiveness of radical mastectomy and the recent tendency towards less radical surgery are well presented. A prognostic classification based on the different histological types of breast carcinoma is useful. Another chapter surveys advances in plastic and reconstructive surgery of the breast.

Fluid replacement after trauma is rationally approached, with presentation of controversial views; eg, use of low molecular weight dextran for resuscitation from hemorrhage is presented as hard to justify; little reason is seen "to spend more time, money or resources developing or evaluating 'artificial colloids.'"

In keeping with the recent concept that parathyroid adenomas and primary hyperplasia may be products of

the same basic process, hyperplasia has recently caused up to one half of the cases of hyperparathyroidism seen at Washington University. Two thirds of these cases had asymptomatic hypercalcemia, and surgical treatment now routinely consists of excision of three and part of the fourth gland.

Other helpful chapters cover post-traumatic ventilatory failure, ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, and uses of gastrin radioimmunoassays.

This book assumes a relatively sophisticated surgical audience. It is well worth the price.

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