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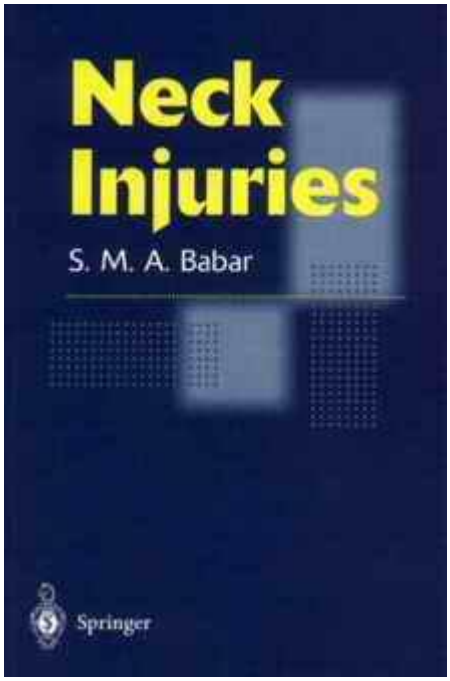
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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

AN EXCELLENT ATTEMPT TO PRESENT THE VAST TOPIC OF NECK INJURIES

Neck Injuries, 1st Edition by S.M.A. Babar. Softcover, 246 x 170 mm.
Springer-Verlag, GmbH & Co.KG, Tiergartenstrasse 17, D-69121 Heidelberg, Germany. Publication date: 1999; 107 Illustrations. xiv + 142 pages, ISBN 1-85233-637-4. Price £49.50

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Road traffic accident is the modern epidemic. It consumes the most number of lives in the developed world especially of the young i.e. the most important and productive age group. Neck injuries are one of the more common of the injuries encountered in such cases. A surgeon working in the emergency room of a tertiary hospital has to deal with such cases on a daily basis. So he has to be well aware of the ways of diagnosing and managing these cases. The present book is an attempt in this direction.

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The author starts first by giving a brief account of the various zones in which the human neck is divided. Figure 2.1 describes the various zones of the neck. We are told that zone I starts from the medial infraclavicular part of the neck and extends to just below the cricoid cartilage and includes the related upper anterior mediastinum. it is also known as the region of the thoracic outlet. Zone II includes the area from just above the cricoid cartilage to the angle of the jaw and Zone III is the small area of the neck between the angle of the mandible and the base of the skull. This description is very helpful in understanding of various injuries which is described in later parts of the book.

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The description of ballistics in chapter 4 is very good. It gives a brief account of the various types of guns and the mechanics of firearms. The various types of injuries and the mechanisms of their production have been described in great detail. This goes a long way in preparing the surgeon what to expect in such injuries especially if the nature of the weapon is known.

The next good thing that we noticed about the book was the description of the use of seat belts. The author has described the ways in which seat belts can prevent injuries. He has also given a nice description of the legal aspects of seat belts especially in insurance claims. In these cases if it can be shown that the person was wearing seat belt he is entitled to a bigger bonus. He has also touched upon the preventive aspects of seat belts briefly.

...The chapter on "iatrogenic injuries" may be considered as one of the high points of the book. This is because the orthopedic surgeons very often ignore iatrogenic injuries. Every surgeon should be aware of these injuries, as ignorance about them can prove extremely costly especially in today's world of litigations and consumer protection laws...

The chapter on "iatrogenic injuries" may be considered as one of the high points of the book. This is because the orthopedic surgeons very often ignore iatrogenic injuries. Every surgeon should be aware of these injuries, as ignorance about them can prove extremely costly especially in today's world of litigations and consumer protection laws. The management of carotid artery lacerations has been explained in great detail. The diagrams are very informative. They give a comprehensive account of the ways these injuries can be caused and their management. As these injuries have a high mortality rate, their early diagnosis and treatment is essential in saving precious lives.

One thing that we desperately missed in this book was the absence of actual photographs. Although the author has made more than 100 hand drawn diagrams, these can never replace actual photographs. It is an old saying, "a picture can describe what a thousand words can't". This is all the more relevant in the medical profession where the normal anatomy of the body can be pretty difficult to understand especially in the neck region where the complexity of the structures can force even the most experienced of surgeons to make mistakes. So we feel there should have been some real photographs - perhaps in colour - to improve the readability and acceptability of the book. However it is precisely because of the lack of photographs that the publishers have been able to keep the cost of the book within reach of most individuals.

The author has devoted a couple of chapters to the various emergency procedures performed in the neck. These include tracheostomy and cricothyroidostomy. These are very crucial as airway is blocked very commonly in injuries to the head and neck region. The familiarity with these techniques can be very handy in emergencies and help in saving precious lives.

In the end we would say that this book is an excellent attempt to present the vast topic of neck injuries in a compact and handy manner. We would like to congratulate the author for bringing out a book that is a necessity for all emergency rooms and operation theatres where such injuries are handled and managed.

-Puneet Setia and Avneesh Gupta



Dr. Puneet Setia is working as a resident doctor in the department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology at Maulana Azad Medical College (MAMC), New Delhi. His research interests include Forensic Radiology, especially the use of radiology in demonstrating coronary narrowing at the post-mortem examination. He is associated with Anil Aggrawal's Internet Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology as a writer and book reviewer. He can be contacted at puneetsetia@rediffmail.com



Dr. Avneesh Gupta qualified as a forensic pathologist from India with honors and is now working as a fellow of forensic pathology in Wayne County, Detroit. He has to his credit a number of publications in leading journals around the world. His landmark thesis on "Cranial Cerebral Damage In Fatal Road Traffic Accidents With Special Reference to Circle Of Willis" can be accessed by clicking here. He is associated with Anil Aggrawal's Internet Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology as a journal associate, writer and book reviewer. He can be contacted at avneeshgupta2000@yahoo.com. During his spare time, he enjoys meeting friends and traveling.

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