Complications of Trauma
Edited by Kenneth L. Mattox

This is a comprehensive textbook of some 668 pages, there are 79 contributors and most sections
have more than one contributor. The book deals with the complications of trauma. These extend
from pre-hospital care to post-surgical complications.

The first section of the book describes the 'big five complications', which are haemorrhage, respira-
tory failure, renal failure, sepsis and multi-organ failure. There is a small second section on pre-
hospital and Emergency Centre trauma complications. The main body of the book consists of the
third and fourth section which refer to general complications following trauma and then complications
by anatomic region.

This book is vast in its content. Although it covers everything from pre-hospital care to complex surgery
and the complications of surgery, all of it is relevant to the accident and emergency (A&E) physician and
his or her understanding of a subject. This is a book that a medical student could read and glean useful
information from, as well as a Consultant. There are many useful little facts such as when doing peri-
cardiocentesis, will the blood be clotted in the pericardium. The answer is that it is clotted in 40% of
cases and partially clotted in 24% of the cases. This may not change your technique but it might help you
understand why it hasn't worked! As well as the obvious areas that one would expect to be covered,
there are sections such as 'geriatric complications' and 'psychosocial complications'. In the section
dealing with complications of wounding agents, there is reference to seatbelts and airbags, as well as the
usual blast injuries and gunshot wounds. The biological agents in this section even deals with nasty
insects and snakes.

The book contains an adequate number of clear diagrams, photographs and radiographs. There is a
radiograph with the nasogastric tube in the brain, much beloved by ATLS devotees, but coming as a
very close second, is a photograph of a Foley catheter re-emerging with balloon, through an unfor-
tunate male patient's perineum. There are numerous references after each section and the index is comprehensive and easy to use.

This book is certainly worthy of a place in any Medical Library and even at £120, it deserves a
place in an Accident and Emergency Department Library.

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