BOOK REVIEWS

Orthopaedic Decision Making

By R. W. BUCHOLZ, LIPPERT, WENGER & EZAKI

Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford. 1984. 310pp. £43.00

This is an interesting book written by American authors and is clearly of more use to the American reader. It is nicely set out and the decision trees are clear to follow. Once trained in a particular subject, Consultants make decisions without consciously considering the steps leading to that decision. It is only when teaching others that the stepping stones that are used to reach the decision have to be re-learned. The decision trees in this book help in re-learning these steps. However, it is a very full book and possibly tries to cover too much and, thereby, does not achieve what it sets out to do. I think it would be more appropriate, perhaps, for the orthopaedic registrar and above who have some knowledge of orthopaedics because, if it is read by the SHOs in accident and emergency or orthopaedics, they will quote some treatments which find little acceptance this side of the Atlantic.

Various points about the book do tend to puzzle me. In particular, the section on the fracture of the clavicle. The indications for open reduction and internal fixation are minimal and, personally, I have never attempted open reduction for a fractured clavicle.

To allot a full page of description and decision tree to sterno-clavicular dislocation is really rather putting this somewhat rare condition out of context.

There is also a section on Scheuermann's Disease, which certainly seems to be far more complicated than most British orthopaedic surgeons would recognize, and certainly, to my knowledge, nobody is practising surgical correction for this condition.

There are some sections that are useful such as 'Fever and the Lower Limb Pain', 'Chronic Ankle Pain' and 'Chronic Ankle Swelling'.

In summary, this is an interesting book but, I think, more appropriate for the career-minded orthopaedic staff rather than accident and emergency or orthopaedic SHOs, and I think it will find its place more on the shelves of an orthopaedic department or a medical library rather than as a handbook for the junior SHO.

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