

HANDBOOK OF SPINE SURGERY. 2012. Edited by: Ali A. Baaj, Praveen V. Mummaneni, Juan S. Uribe, Alexander R. Vaccaro, Mark S. Greenberg. Published by Thieme Medical Publishers, Inc. 455 pages. C\$90 approx.

Rated ★★★★★

Back in the early 1990s, when I started my residency in Neurosurgery, there appeared on the shelves of better bookstores a small blue paperback book entitled “The Handbook of Neurosurgery”, written (and published!) by Mark Greenberg, now Chief of Neurosurgery at the VA hospital in Tampa, Florida. It was a great little book which I kept close to my side throughout my residency. It had all the important answers in it – everything from anatomy to pharmacology and physiology. I remember transcribing, in large friendly letters, the words from the Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy - “Don’t Panic “ to its inside cover. It included a good section on spinal neurosurgery, and had a remarkable index. It served me well.

The Handbook of Spine Surgery reviewed herein is written with a similar philosophy I suspect. It is a compact little book which is organized into broad sections of anatomy, surgery, pathology, surgical techniques, and an appendix on positioning, orthoses, and functional assessment scales.



This book, like most of spine surgery, is a combination of good basic anatomy, physiology, and biomechanics admixed with a generous offering of opinions. I think the strength of this handbook is to assemble the common topics in spine surgery in an accessible format, and provide the reader a good outline for further reading and discussion. Complex subjects such as Chiari malformations or cervical trauma are certainly distilled down to major topics; I wish it were all this simple! That of course is the only way to pack so many subjects into a single handbook. Whereas one might criticise this book for being so stripped down as to be of little help in day to day practice for a spine surgeon, I think it would be quite helpful to those involved in the care of spine patients outside of the operating room, and in preparation for exams. Indeed, cover to cover, this book reviews a substantial body of knowledge. I’m not so sure its better than “Googling” a given topic on one’s smart phone, and certainly not as good as “google scholaring” a particular topic, but it is more durable and water resistant!

Diagrams and charts of assessment scales are very good, and assembled in a logical manner which makes them accessible with a good index. Though the references for each section are a bit more limited than the Handbook of Neurosurgery, in these current times of web searching, reference lists are less important.

In all, the book is very reasonably priced and would be a useful part of a library for individuals studying or treating spinal disorders.

*Richard Fox
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2011 REVIEWER OF THE YEAR - Richard McLachlan

We are pleased to present the 2012 CJNS Reviewer of the Year Award to Dr. Rick McLachlan from Western University, London Ontario. Rick has provided excellent, timely reviews of numerous articles in Epilepsy and Clinical Neurophysiology for the Journal. He has also been a faithful contributor of Journal articles and has served for years on the CJNS Liaison Committee for the CNSF. We hope we can count on him for a similar stellar performance for years to come and promise never to bother him when he is golfing. G. Bryan Young, Editor-in-Chief, CJNS.



An MD graduate of Western University, Dr. McLachlan trained in neurology at the same institution followed by a Medical Research Council of Canada fellowship in neurophysiology at the Montreal Neurological Institute and McGill University. He joined the Department of Clinical Neurological Sciences at Western in 1983. From 2000-2003 he worked in the Middle East as Director of the EEG Laboratory and neurologist on the Medical Service of Shaikh Khalifa Medical Centre in Abu Dhabi.

After returning to Canada, he became Director of the EEG Department and Co-director of the Epilepsy Program at London Health Sciences Centre. Dr. McLachlan has been an invited lecturer in numerous Canadian and international cities including Tokyo, Dubai, Jeddah, Doha, Kuwait, Tehran and Muscat. He is also the only person to hold a four-year term as President of the Canadian League Against Epilepsy in 1995-1999. He is currently researching how a single digit golf handicap is achieved.