

Thyroid Surgery

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I generally avoid reviewing books that I can only view on a monitor, but I made an exception here. This is a quality book that is Open Access. Yes, this is a new textbook that is free; something increasingly seen in journal articles, but expect to have to sacrifice the trees for a longer read. There is of course a softback version (see above) at what seems a very reasonable price.

The foreword told me that this is the latest in a series of Updates in *Surgery* published by Springer since 2007 and is the work of the Italian Society of Surgery, as reflected by the list of contributors. The perils of reading casually off a screen were brought home to me by the sentence “Thyroid Surgery has never been addressed in English”, opening a paragraph. After a howl of outrage, I understood that it, of course, meant as part of this series. It must be my age. The Preface reminded us of “reports of more than 50% of thyroid surgery being performed by surgeons who operate less than five cases per year”, which astonished me.

The content is divided into four parts (not the three of Caesar’s Gaul). It opens with chapters on the pre-operative

features of history, preparation for surgery, pathology and the challenges of various goitre (however you choose to spell that) presentations, even the “forgotten goiter”, a novelty to this retired otologist.

Part II encompasses every surgical approach to the gland, whether conventional, video/robot assisted, through the axilla, breast or even the lower lip. The colour illustrations for this (and many chapters on surgery) did remind me of one advantage of the e book. I doubt any printer could reproduce images of this quality, but I cannot judge the paper version.

I particularly liked Part III on pre-operative complications, with chapters on laryngeal nerve monitoring and palsy, preserving or restoring those parathyroid glands, haematoma or tracheal injury. A brief final section of two chapters opened with training and monitoring the learning curve. This was followed by a chapter on those prognostic markers known by their abbreviations (I doubt many could become acronyms), such as BRAFV600E, which dominate the latest research to judge by recent submissions to this journal.

This has much to offer the trainee, and also the experienced surgeon (if only defined as more than five procedures per year perhaps), as it is very good at recent advances and is a very entertaining read throughout. The editors are to be congratulated for the consistency in style, no easy feat in a multi-author book. Oh, and it is free (see above)!

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