Otolaryngology: A Surgical Notebook. K. J. Lee, Elizabeth H. Toh, eds. New York: Thieme Medical Publishers, 2007; 336 pp. $59.95.

Otolaryngology: A Surgical Notebook is a new publication edited by K. J. Lee and Elizabeth H. Toh. This is their first time as editors and authors. The editors present a broad range of commonly occurring surgical themes in 41 separate chapters. This “notebook” is a novel approach to a condensed textbook in which the editors present a precise and detailed technical manual for use as a quick reference. This text exceeds what is expected in a classic handbook yet is briefer than a reference work.

Drs. Lee and Toh have authored many of the chapters. Where they believed others’ opinions would be more constructive, they included contributions from well-known and widely respected authors. This method allows them to address the diverse nature of the commonly encountered surgical procedures by a practicing otolaryngologist.

The chapters are presented in condensed form: a surgical procedure that is discussed from diagnosis to surgical technique to postoperative care. This method of presentation is succinct but not abbreviated.

When the discussion of the technical aspects of a specific surgical procedure is insufficient for a thorough consideration of the issue, the editors provide additional information in a rigorous and detailed discussion of the disease state. This affords the reader a brief, but a well-balanced, and concise summary of the disease state, diagnosis and surgical treatment.

The chapters are presented in a concise and well-considered fashion. The technical elements of the surgical procedure, its planning, the review of the anatomy, and the steps in the actual surgical operation are unambiguous and lucid. The information is current, practical, and relevant.

There is no consistent style to the illustrations because of the varied authorship. The graphic material consists of a mix of new work and reproductions from previously published textbook and manuals. I did not find this to be objectionable but rather reflects the diverse nature of the contributors.

This “notebook” does not represent itself as a comprehensive, definitive, or fundamental textbook given to the scholarly study of a single subject or an encyclopedic coverage of otolaryngology. By intention, the book serves as a pocket guide, or digest, of a body of knowledge. If, as a resident, one were to have the time or foresight to distill each operation or every operating room experience into a notebook for future reference, one may have approximated this work.

The coverage of the technical issues is to the point and complete. The editors have also successfully achieved a wonderful blend of diverse instructional styles.

I would highly recommend this notebook to residents because it will provide them with immediate and helpful information. Medical students, in preparation for rotation to the otolaryngology service, should consider this text a must have. This text should also be a consideration for mid-level providers, both nurse practitioners and physician assistants, as a reference in discussions with patients and families prior to a surgical experience. This text would also be a welcome addition for the primary care provider as a reference for the understanding of a specific procedure. Finally, I recommend this text for the experienced practitioner’s collection, where it will serve as a rapid reference for infrequently performed procedures.

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Surgery of the Auricle: Tumors-Trauma-Defects-Abnormalities. Hilko Weerda. New York: Thieme Medical Publishers, 2007; 326 pp. $229.95.

Surgery of the Auricle: Tumors-Trauma-Defects-Abnormalities by Hilko Weerda, MD, DMD, is a valuable, comprehensive reference for all surgeons who treat patients with both acquired and congenital auricular and middle-ear problems. Even experienced auricular and middle-ear reconstructive surgeons may gain important insights into the many alternative possible surgical options. It is clear that many contributors to this volume are true authorities in this field, such as Professors Weerda, Siegert, and Jahrsdoerfer.