

Book Review

The Asian-Oceanian Textbook of Radiology. Edited by Wilfred C. G. Peh and Yoshihiro Hiramatsu. Singapore: TTT Asia Media, 1,300 pp., 2003. \$120

A radiology textbook can be organized around numerous principles, including organ systems (neuroimaging), imaging techniques (MRI), patient age (pediatric radiology), and categories of disorder (trauma radiology). This inaugural edition of *The Asian-Oceanian Textbook of Radiology* contains elements of each of these, but its reason for being is geographic. For decades, radiology residents and practicing radiologists in the Far East have had no choice but to rely on American and Western European texts for English-language radiology education. Now, for the first time, the region boasts its own English-language textbook.

Why would a specific region require its own textbook? For one thing, practice patterns may vary from region to region, depending on disease incidence. In this case, for example, the incidences of gastric carcinoma and hepatocellular carcinoma are much higher in the East, as are the incidences of a number of tropical infectious diseases. Likewise, socioeconomic conditions in the region vary more widely than in North America, meaning that physicians may need to rely much more heavily on radiographic diagnosis in situations in which MRI is unavailable. Finally, such a text can play an important role in building a sense of professional identity and pride among radiologists in the Asian and Australasian regions.

English is the logical language for such a text because it has become the lingua franca of international medicine.

The organization of the book is standard, with the first section devoted to imaging techniques and the second section organized by organ systems and their disorders. The book consists of 55 chapters by 80 authors from 15 countries and totals more than 1,300 pages, an impressive organizational feat on the part of the editors. The book also boasts nearly 2,400 figures and 75 tables. In addition to standard sections on areas such as the head and neck, the reproductive system, and the musculoskeletal system, the volume also includes a section on multisystem diseases and an appendix on the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), added as the book went to press. Each organ system-based section begins with an introduction to the relevant anatomy, and the authors have attempted to provide a problem-oriented approach to imaging.

The book is directed primarily at radiology residents and practicing radiologists, but like any good general radiology textbook, it may also prove useful for medical students, nonradiologist physicians, and other radiology personnel such as technologists and nurses. As a resource for residents, this text might be enhanced by outlining learning objectives at the beginning of each chapter and providing study questions at the end. However, it is eas-

ily readable and provides a good overview of contemporary radiology, with state-of-the-art examples of more recent imaging developments such as fetal MRI. The book may also serve as a useful single-volume review and reference for practicing radiologists, although it cannot provide the depth that a more narrowly defined textbook (on neuroimaging) can offer.

Will this volume prove useful to readers outside its intended geographic audience? Ironically, the answer is yes, and this is one respect in which the editors' intentions are not fully realized. The discussion of gastric carcinoma, for example, although good, is nearly indistinguishable from those found in American and Western European textbooks, and the same might be said for the discussion of hepatocellular carcinoma. As one might expect, most references are also by American and Western European authors. Unless readers opening the book at random happen upon the chapters on tropical diseases, veterinary imaging, or SARS, they will not suspect that they are viewing an Asian-Oceanian textbook. Nevertheless, the book represents an important step in the development of radiology in this important and rapidly growing part of the world.

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