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Handbook of Plastic Surgery

Edited by Steven E. Greer, M.D., Prosper Benhaim, M.D., H. Peter Lorenz, M.D., James Chang, M.D., and Marc H. Hedrick, M.D. Pp. 771. Marcel Dekker, New York, N.Y., 2004. Price: \$135.

In an ever-expanding field such as plastic surgery, it is increasingly more difficult to summarize the extensive amount of available information in a quick and easy-to-read format. Single-volume texts on the entirety of plastic surgery must sufficiently cover the myriad of topics without becoming so diluted as to become unhelpful to the reader. It is a daunting task, to be sure, and one that the *Handbook of Plastic Surgery* attempts to tackle.

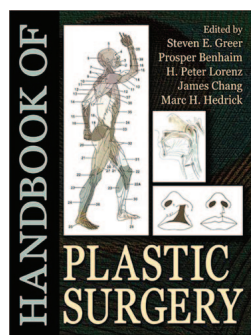
This 771-page hardback book is subdivided into 10 sections: "Patient Management," "Basic Techniques and Principles in Plastic Surgery," "Skin and Soft Tissue," "Head and Neck," "Pediatric Plastic Surgery," "Microsurgery," "Hand Surgery," "Trunk and Lower Extremity," "Breast Surgery," and "Aesthetic Surgery." The lengths of the sections vary, with the greatest

number of pages devoted to "Head and Neck," "Pediatric Plastic Surgery," "Hand Surgery," and "Aesthetic Surgery." The book was authored by several well-known and well-respected plastic surgeons whose names are easily recognizable by the reader. Evidently, it was also authored by residents (according to the editor's preface), although this information is not available within the text because there is no author reference section. Instead, all authors and their current locations are listed at the beginning of each chapter, but that is all.

As admitted by the Editor-in-Chief, this handbook is modeled after such popular quick-reference manuals as the *Washington Manual* and the *Mont Reid Surgical Handbook*, as evidenced by the bullet point and outline format. The entire book is printed in black and white, and the illustrations are a combination of simplistic diagrams, artistic renderings, and basic reproductions from other texts, which are mainly used to describe anatomy and basic techniques. The style is terse, yet clear and understandable. There is no standard design to the chapters; each author has followed his or her own approach, which lends to variability in format, length, depth, and style.

As a single-volume text on plastic surgery, this book succeeds in addressing the requisite subtopics and their respective high points. It is comprehensive, yet very easy to read, understand, and digest. It includes several additional subjects that most other basic plastic surgery texts do not address. For example, the subsection on "Patient Management" addresses such topics as blood products, postoperative care, and complications, all of which are vitally important to the care of the plastic surgery patient yet rarely mentioned in other texts. Other interesting and relevant additions to the standard table of contents are chapters on general dermatology, radiation, principles of orthognathic surgery, hand burns (specifically), splinting and immobilization, sedation, and nasal and sinus pathology. These well-written chapters add to the comprehensiveness of the book. The "Pediatric Plastic Surgery" section, with contributions from the likes of Bradley, Kawamoto, Longaker, McCarthy, Cutting, and Mulliken, is outstanding.

The shortcomings of this text are somewhat self-inflicted. In an attempt to cover the breadth of plastic surgery in a single book with a limited amount of space, some information was necessarily omitted. This is expected, although some



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DOI: 10.1097/01.prs.0000204213.33455.1d

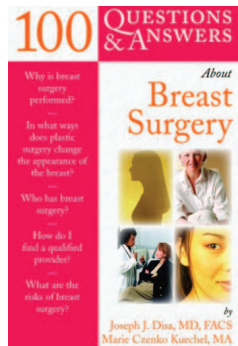
chapters suffer more than others. Perhaps the biggest issue, though, is that this text is positioned as a handbook, as its moniker would suggest. As a handbook, this nearly 2-inch thick, 771-page hardback volume is not portable and does not fit into the coat pocket of the medical student, resident, or fellow, as the *Washington Manual* and *Mont Reid* handbooks do. Therefore, I would say that it is not truly a handbook. Instead, it is a useful, single-volume, “high-impact” shelf reference book, and as such, it will undoubtedly prove its usefulness to those in training, those studying for the in-service or written and oral boards, and those studying for recertification.

Jeff Janis, M.D.

100 Questions & Answers about Breast Surgery

By Joseph J. Disa, M.D., and Marie Czenko Kuechel, M.A. Pp. 209. Jones and Bartlett Publishers, Sudbury, Mass., 2005. Price: \$18.95.

“Empower yourself!” These words are in bold type on the back cover, and I think they epitomize the goal of the book. The book is written for women who are contemplating or have had breast surgery and seeks to give them the answers as well as the questions that are pertinent to their situation. It is also of some interest to surgeons who perform breast surgery, to give us an idea of what questions are on the minds of women undergoing breast surgery and what kinds of information women have from public lay sources. The book is a standard paperback and covers both reconstructive and cosmetic topics. How to handle the issues on the minds of women undergoing mastectomy and contemplating breast enhancement



can be delicate. The authors take an even, serious, and authoritative tone and handle this broad range of potentially emotional issues admirably well. I do not believe that women seeking breast augmentation would be put off by the reconstructive portion or that women with reconstructive issues would be upset by the way augmentation is handled.

The book is divided into 12 parts that help guide the reader to the section of interest. Within the questions, readers are additionally prompted to go on to other questions for further, related information when available. I found the book to be clear and well written, with up-to-date information, including many Web sites as references in the text. Referencing Web sites should help to keep the book current and is particularly useful to the lay public interested in medical information. The text is supplemented with black-and-white illustrations taken from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons' patient information brochures.

The shortcomings of the book are predictable. There are limits to the amount of information and detail that can go into a self-help book of this length. I would not have been as biased toward silicone implants as the authors are, but it is a bias that is widely held by many in our field. I would also have avoided unambiguous declarative statements, such as “you will definitely stand taller and have an improved posture and confidence,” because there will undoubtedly be someone who will prove this statement false and not let you forget it for some time.

Overall, I found the book to be informative and clearly presented. Recommending it to patients who call your office with “100 questions” may save you and your staff from having to answer so many yourselves. Clearly, women who read this book will be more empowered to move forward with a firm knowledge base as they contemplate breast surgery. Plastic surgeons who read it will be more familiar with patient issues and their level of understanding.

Neil A. Fine, M.D.