
THIS BOOK is the culmination of 25 years of productive work in the science and art of the utilization of staples in surgery. Professor Ravitch almost single-handedly introduced staplers to the United States when he purchased a Russian instrument in 1958 and succeeded in persuading an American manufacturer to enter the field. Since then, Steichen and Ravitch have tested the instruments, developed techniques utilizing the instruments, and conducted training symposia to instruct other surgeons in their use.

The ingenious techniques described in this book are a just tribute to Steichen's and Ravitch's productivity. The book is divided into two parts, the first of which deals with a history of mechanical devices in surgery, a description of available American staple instruments, and a summary of the data on the healing of stapled wounds. The historical chapter is a delightful catalogue of wonderfully ingenious instruments. This historical review also provides a summary of the brilliant Russian work on staples. An extensive bibliography is included. Omitted is a reference to the authors' previously published abstraction of this chapter (Steichen FM, Ravitch MM. History of mechanical devices and instruments for surgery. Curr Probl Surg 1982; 19:1-52) and the excellent monograph by Guthy and Brendel which summarizes the Russian experience in stapling through 1967 (Guthy E, Brendel W. Prog Surg 1969; 7:56-113).

The chapter on American mechanical suture instruments gives short shrift to instruments other than those produced by the United States Surgical Corporation. This perhaps reflects the pioneering work of this company in the development of stapling devices. It is to be acknowledged that new instruments are being introduced with breathtaking frequency, making it difficult for any publication to be completely up-to-date.

The remainder of the book deals with the use of staplers in surgical operations. In an introduction to this section, the authors describe their experience with staplers in a variety of operations and summarize the complications associated with the use of the instruments.

The chapters that follow detail the use of staplers in operations on the stomach, esophagus, biliary tract and pancreas, small bowel, colon and rectum, and more briefly in urinary and gynecologic operations, pulmonary surgery, and in morbid obesity. Each chapter begins generally with a discussion of the authors' techniques for performing stapled operations on the organ under discussion. These descriptions are copiously illustrated by the beautiful drawings of Mr. William Baker.

The remainder of each chapter is in essence an annotated bibliography describing stapling techniques devised by other authors. These are accompanied by drawings reproduced from the original works and by pithy, cogent comments by Ravitch and Steichen. The reader is thus given a comprehensive selection of techniques for employment of staple instruments. The uninhibited comments provide guidance as to which techniques will be of value to employ in clinical practice. Virtually every worthwhile staple technique described through 1982 has been included.

My enthusiasm for the text—the beautiful Baker drawings, the up-to-date bibliography, and the comprehensive discussion of other techniques—is strongly tempered by the poor design of the book. In this respect, the authors have been badly served by their publisher. Much of the text has been randomly scattered among the illustrations without much concern with continuity. Sometimes, for no apparent reason, the text ends in the middle of a page, the remainder of which is left blank. One page, headed by the caption "Notes," is left completely blank! The most critical problem is the poor editing of illustrations taken from other sources. For the most part, these include the original captions, frequently only partially reproduced. Identifying numbers from the original publication have not been cropped out. To these have been added the additional lettering of the authors' captions. The result is chaotic. The illustrations are extremely difficult to decipher; this detracts from the value of the book. It is instructive to compare this volume with the previously published History of Mechanical Devices and Instruments for Suturing, printed by the same publisher. The latter was competently designed, with well-cropped illustrations and proper arrangement of the text. A pity that the same care taken by Current Problems in Surgery was not carried over to this book.

It should be mentioned that a useful atlas detailing many of Ravitch's and Steichen's techniques, with similar handsome drawings by Baker, has been available gratis from the United States Surgical Corporation.

Despite its faults in design, this is a book that belongs on the desk of every surgeon who intends to use staplers in his practice.

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THE FIRST EDITION of Eugene Braunwald's comprehensive textbook of cardiovascular disease has already attained the status of a classic. In this second edition of the textbook, significant additions and updating of the text further increase the stature of the book and continue to provide a state-of-the-art, comprehensive evaluation of every significant cardiovascular disorder. Clinical aspects of cardiovascular diseases are accompanied by the relevant pathophysiology and pharmacology.

The new edition continues the tradition of the earlier text by dividing the subject into four major parts. Part I deals with the examination of the patient with cardiovascular disease and includes the principles of the history and physical examination along with the latest noninvasive techniques for evaluation of cardiac function, including echocardiography, nuclear cardiology, exercise stress testing, and electrophysiology. Additional
space has been allotted to the newer techniques, including a chapter on nuclear magnetic resonance imaging by Drs. Radner and Pohost. The more invasive techniques of cardiac catheterization and coronary arteriography are also presented in detail.

In Part II, abnormalities of circulatory function are described, including an outstanding chapter on the contraction of the normal heart that strongly emphasizes the basic aspects of myocardial function in a thoroughly readable and understandable fashion. Other excellent contributions include the pathophysiology of heart failure by Dr. Braunwald, the forms of acute circulatory failure by Dr. Sobel, and a strong section on electrophysiology by Dr. Zipes.

In the third part, the diseases of the heart, pericardium, aorta, and pulmonary vascular bed in infants and adults are described in detail. A new chapter on rehabilitation of patients with coronary artery disease by Dr. Oberman has been added.

The last major division includes diseases of other organ systems that affect the heart and circulation, including genetic, rheumatic, hematologic, oncologic, neurologic, endocrine, and renal disorders. A new chapter on the general principles of cardiac surgery is included which is an appropriate and timely addition.

Fifty-one authors contributed to this work, although Dr. Braunwald wrote or contributed to approximately one-half of the total number of chapters. This monumental effort on the part of Dr. Braunwald provides continuity in the book and avoids the fragmentation and repetition that have often been characteristic of multiauthored texts.

The major strengths of this volume are the very detailed and comprehensive discussions of the diseases that affect the heart and circulation. There is an excellent balance between the basic pathophysiology, pharmacology, clinical manifestations, and treatment of the various cardiac disorders. Each chapter is provided with extensive and up-to-date reference lists. In an attempt to limit the bulk of the book, the figures have been decreased slightly in size with little loss in clarity. As a result, over 500 new tables and illustrations have been added without increasing the number of pages of text.

Although it is difficult to find any fault with a "classic" textbook such as this, there are a few weaknesses. As in the previous edition, several of the illustrations are poorly reproduced and there are numerous areas where the type style changes unnecessarily, giving perhaps unintentional emphasis to certain paragraphs and sections of the manuscript.

This is an outstanding textbook of cardiovascular diseases and remains the standard by which other texts will be judged in the future. Every physician dealing with cardiovascular disease in its myriad manifestations will want to add this book to his library.

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This monograph is the first volume of a projected series in Gastroenterology edited by Jules Dienstag and Anthony Imbembo. Fredric Daum, with the assistance of Stanley E. Fisher, has edited the reports of a conference held in November 1981 on extrahepatic biliary atresia. The topics discussed are: etiology and evaluation, surgical therapy, liver transplantation, nutrition and other supportive aspects of postoperative care, and an update on research primarily on immune mechanisms and mechanisms of cholestasis and scarring. The monograph reflects the shifting interest in biliary atresia from differential diagnosis from neonatal hepatitis to concern with the results of surgical therapy of biliary diversion and its complications.

The presentations are succinct but thorough. The overall view, expressed by Alagille, remains very guarded—"Although many patients achieve good bile drainage after the Kasai procedure, information is provided to indicate that virtually all biliary atresia patients will eventually develop cirrhosis." This perhaps overly pessimistic view nevertheless underlines the need for continuing understanding of the underlying hepatic injury processes that both cause and perpetuate the process.

The reports on the surgical therapy are an excellent current status report. Two interesting observations are made. First, neither increased age nor absence of ducts at the hilum should be considered absolute contraindications to portoenterostomy. Second, cholangitis does not totally correlate with the subsequent development of cirrhosis or of portal hypertension. The authors clearly suggest that a factor or more are still missing from the puzzle.

Particularly valuable and relevant are the papers on the nutritional support and other measures designed to improve biliary drainage and hepatic healing. These clearly go beyond the limited problem of biliary atresia.

In summary, this monograph is a necessary addition for those working in the field of this difficult pediatric surgical problem. It should also serve and be available as an important reference source to other physicians working in the field of liver disease in patients of all ages.

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During the ten years between the first and third editions of Gastrointestinal Disease, by Sleisenger and Fordtran, there has been an explosion of new knowledge, technology, and therapy. It is appropriate, therefore, that this third edition discards many sections and even whole chapters, adds 19 new chapters, and comes with a format that divides the book into five manageable parts. It is unlikely that a single reviewer will have read critically every part of this large monograph. I have chosen, rather, to share both the impressions gained from many pleasant hours sampling and savoring the various sections of the book, and from a more thoughtful reading of those sections that I felt qualified to examine critically.

This third edition is organized into five major parts. Part I, "Some Biological Aspects of Gastrointestinal Function and Disease," consists of six chapters, followed by Part II, "Pathophysiology, Diagnosis, and Management of Major Symptoms and Syndromes," 17 chapters. Part III, "Anatomy, Physiology, and Disease of the Gastrointestinal Organs," 73 chapters, is followed by Part IV, "Special Diagnostic Procedures," ten chapters, and finally by Part V, "Nutritional Management," comprising five chapters. This organization groups information so as to make it readily accessible to a diverse readership. Those seeking a foundation for the general understanding of the function and examination of the digestive tract in health and disease will be drawn to the first six chapters, the section on diagnostic procedures, and the final section on nutrition. Those primarily