OTOLARYNGOLOGY CASES: THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI CLINICAL PORTFOLIO

By Myles L. Pensak, Thieme Medical Publishers, New York, New York, 2010, 460 pp, $89.95

Whether one is new to the practice of otolaryngology or has been engaged in this specialty for years, Otolaryngology Cases: The University of Cincinnati Clinical Portfolio is a useful reference to have at hand. As our specialty continues to grow and practitioners focus their clinical expertise in specific fields, the ability to have a concise quick reference at hand is a valuable tool. The cases have been thoughtfully selected, well organized, and concisely written. The format used is especially helpful to the young otolaryngologist in training.

Otolaryngology residents and fellows will find this text very helpful as they rotate through the multiple otolaryngology subspecialty services and in preparation for in-service and board certification examinations. For each topic discussed, a brief history is provided followed by a relevant well-thought-out differential diagnosis, a skill which is difficult for persons in training to master. A textbook such as this is an excellent tool that residents and fellows can use to hone their differential diagnosis skills and is a particular strength of this text. Additional topics covered with each case include test interpretation, diagnosis, medical and surgical management, rehabilitation and follow-up, multiple choice review questions, and suggested readings. Tables, charts, and figures are clear and concise and are neither distracting nor obtrusive. Color images, radiographic studies, and pathology slides are high quality and high yield. Likewise, practicing otolaryngologists can quickly refer to the text for patients they may encounter while on call and while seeing consultations that differ from their day-to-day practices.

In addition to the aforementioned strengths, 88 cases are covered in this text from each otolaryngology discipline. This text by no means replaces the in-depth reading required to become a practicing otolaryngologist, nor is that the intention of the book. Rather, Otolaryngology Cases: The University of Cincinnati Clinical Portfolio provides the clinical context that may be not easily referenced from other textbooks. There are very few weaknesses in this book. Every case cannot be reviewed; however, with the growing demand for facial plastics and reconstructive surgery, this section could be expanded. In addition, the sleep section is rather light. It would have been nice to have a case on pediatric sleep disordered breathing, and in general this section lacks figures, photographs, or other supporting material for this high-yield topic. Last, this text appears to replace the Otolaryngology: A Case Study Approach by Thomas Tami et al, which is no longer in print. In that particular text, a comprehensive multiple choice test was included at the end of the book, which was a great study tool and would have been nice to have had in this new book as well.

This book is an invaluable tool for residents and fellows in training as a review, to hone their skills at developing a differential diagnosis, and developing a well-thought-out clinical plan for many of the patients they will encounter in the emergency department, inpatient consultations, and outpatient clinical practice. This book fills the void that was left when the Thomas Tami et al text went out of print, and I do not believe there is anything else written like this available for otolaryngologists. Last, otolaryngologists, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants may find this quick reference helpful and will find its size and format easy to handle.

In the academic arena, where teaching is an important component of resident education and training, using these cases as a platform to guide resident teaching may be helpful, especially for those joining academic departments after recently completing fellowships. It is not often that one can find a well-written, high-yield text with high-quality color images, for $89.95.

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