AESTHETICS AND FUNCTIONALITY IN EAR RECONSTRUCTION

By W. Arnold, Rainer Staudenmaier, S. Karger AG, Basel Medical and Scientific Publishers, Basel Switzerland, 2010, 136 pp, $159.00

The 68th volume of the series Advances in Oto-Rhino-Laryngology is an excellent overview of the state-of-the-art in management of microtia repair. Published in 2010, the text contains 8 chapters that review different approaches to this challenging problem. The text is well written and includes 117 figures and photographs in both color and black and white. Microtia reconstruction is a controversial field, and this book presents an unbiased overview of the major approaches to these complex procedures.

The text is designed to include functional advances in microtia reconstruction including procedures that combine hearing restoration (bone-anchored hearing aids, cochlear implants, or aural atresia repair) with aesthetic procedures to reduce the number of procedures that these patients undergo. Diagramatic figures are included alongside intraoperative photographs to give the reader an excellent understanding of the fine points of each surgical technique. Practical details including drain placement, preference for dressing material, and use of training devices expand the reader’s understanding of the importance of perioperative preparation and management in obtaining good outcomes.

Aesthetics and Functionality in Ear Reconstruction is organized thoughtfully into 8 chapters beginning with a comprehensive history of auricular reconstruction and ending with developing approaches such as customized tissue engineering. The core of the book devotes a chapter each to autogenous ear reconstruction, porous polyethylene implants, and auricular prostheses. The discussion of tissue engineering includes clinical applicability as well as basic science theory and methodology appropriate for the microtia surgeon. Each chapter has a well-developed reference list, and the book has both an author index as well as a subject index to allow easy referencing.

The text is of interest to any surgeon who is involved in microtia repair or hearing restoration in children with aural atresia. The combined brevity and comprehensive approach of Aesthetics and Functionality in Ear Reconstruction makes it an excellent reference for residents and fellows. It may be of particular use to microtia surgeons early in their career because of the number of “pearls” included in the description of each technique.

In summary, Aesthetics and Functionality in Ear Reconstruction is highly recommended reading for microtia surgeons and surgeons-in-training. The book is well written, concise, and extremely accessible. Overall, it is a strongly illustrated, very high-yield text that covers a comprehensive set of viewpoints and approaches to these complex congenital problems.

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