

## REVIEW OF RECENT BOOKS

### **A Practical Atlas of Congenital Heart Disease**

*By Audrey Smith and Roxane McKay*

2004, London, United Kingdom, Springer-Verlag

464 pp, illustrated, \$289.00

ISBN: 185233729X

*Reviewed by Tom R. Karl, MD, and Lars Nolke, FRCS C-Th*

In an era marked by a plethora of multi-authored edited textbooks, many with chapters of recycled material written by junior trainees, it is a pleasure to review a book that has been researched and written by two authors. One finds a consistency of style and theme that cannot be duplicated in an edited work. Furthermore, the authors are eminently qualified and experienced for such an undertaking. In reviewing this book, we include the viewpoint of a senior trainee in pediatric cardiac surgery, about to embark on his consultant's post, and that of a practicing pediatric cardiac surgeon with 20 years experience in the specialty.

This elegant and comprehensive work presents a productive synthesis of cardiac morphology and cardiac surgery. The book begins with a compelling forward by Drs John W. Kirklin and James K. Kirklin. The goals set forth by the authors are laudable and well met. Although the book is intended to serve as an atlas, it has many elements of a textbook as well, with concise but comprehensive discussions of various congenital cardiac lesions crossing the spectra of frequency and complexity. The authors employ a hybrid anatomic terminology that should be well understood by all pediatric cardiac surgeons. The anatomical discussions are excellent, and the sections dealing with isomerism and atrioventricular septal defects are some of the best that we have seen anywhere.

The layout of the book includes photographs of anatomic specimens with interpretive line drawings on the facing pages, including both anatomical and surgical aspects. The aesthetic aspect of the black and white photographs is quite satisfactory, especially for preserved anatomic specimens. However, we would have enjoyed a selection of high resolution intraoperative color photos as well, which might have enhanced the book enormously. At first the line drawings seem overly simplified and somewhat superficial, however as one reads through various chapters and integrates the drawings with the photos, one comes to realize that this is a very useful approach with inclusion of all of the important anatomic details and elimination of some of the less relevant ones. The technical surgical discussions are clear and precise, often including pitfalls with suggestions about how to avoid them. There is little mention of interventional alternatives and adjunct treatment, both critically important for pediatric cardiac surgeons working in the current era. Also the authors might have dedicated more space in the book to the more common defects.

We think that this book would be a good resource for cardiologists (especially echocardiographers), intensivists, anatomists, and especially pediatric cardiac surgeons at any level of experience. It will help fill the gap caused by the unavailability of a good collection of anatomic specimens in most centers. We compliment the authors for meeting their goal of producing a practical atlas, and in fact they have achieved a good deal more. This book will make an excellent addition to any cardiac surgical library.

*San Francisco, California*