PRINCIPLES OF FACIAL RECONSTRUCTION: A SUBUNIT APPROACH TO CUTANEOUS REPAIR, SECOND EDITION

By David A. Sherris and Wayne F. Larrabee, Jr., Thieme Medical Publishers, New York, NY, 2010, 320 pp, $159.95

Principles of Facial Reconstruction: A Subunit Approach to Cutaneous Repair, Second Edition, is the 2010 successor to the well-known first edition, which was authored by the same authors in 1995 and which has served as a popular text for beginning otolaryngologists and facial plastic surgeons. The target audience includes any surgeon who might deal with the reconstruction of facial defects arising from cutaneous tumors or trauma, including otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons, facial plastic surgeons, head and neck surgical oncologists, plastic surgeons, and dermatologic surgeons.

This second edition is an embellishment of the black-and-white first edition and contains approximately 300 pages of text, color photos, graphics, and flow diagrams for the local flap reconstruction of a variety of facial defects. The text contains 2 introductory chapters on soft tissue biomechanics and fundamental surgical technique, followed by 7 chapters classifying facial cutaneous defects according to their location in the scalp, forehead, periorbital, nose, cheek, ears, and lip and chin regions. The last chapter, which is a new addition from the first edition, introduces harvesting techniques for such grafts as septal, ear, and costal cartilage as well as calvarial bone. Through schematics and patient examples, the book illustrates the well-established approach of utilizing the borders of facial subunits to camouflage defects and flap incisions. Algorithms are supplied to help the beginning reconstructionalist develop a thought process applicable to most defects in the particular region discussed. The text is well-illustrated and provides for easy reading, with each flap or its variations succinctly summarized on usually 1 or 2 pages. The review encompasses a myriad of popular flaps, with the eponymic or descriptive names typically given in the literature for such flaps, and provides the head and neck reconstructionalist with a quick reference. Especially valuable are algorithms on lip and eyelid defect closure, which provides a guideline toward decision-making and a basic protocol for all residents and fellows to memorize before written or oral examinations. References to suggested reading and original articles are supplied at the end of each chapter.

While the text introduces the surgeon to a number of flaps, the text is certainly not a detailed library of all potential flaps, nor is it intended to be. More seasoned facial plastic surgeons or head and neck reconstructionalists may consider the book a fundamental review, but for beginning surgeons, it serves as an excellent starting point. The authors preface that the flow diagrams and algorithms are oversimplified to help the less experienced surgeon. The book focuses on repairing defects through adjacent tissue transfer, local pedicle flaps, and free grafts. Intentionally omitted are larger flaps including regional and free flaps needed for larger composite defects of the upper face, maxilla, or mandible. Therefore, to the head and neck oncologist or reconstructionalist dealing with larger or deeper tumors, the book will have limited value. Furthermore, the surgeon seeking more exact or mathematical nuances of local flap design may find the book lacking in such aspects.

In summary, the second edition of Principles of Facial Reconstruction is a worthy addition to any library and fills the role of providing head and neck surgeons with a convenient introductory overview of popular flaps used to repair common cutaneous facial defects. For the surgeon seeking a how-to manual on facial defect repair that is not beset with inordinate detail, this text concisely encompasses facial defect reconstruction in a simplified format. Hence, the book is particularly useful for beginning facial reconstructionalists and provides a concise review for more experienced surgeons.

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