
Drs. Smouha and Bojrab have managed to fill a void in otologic textbooks with the release of their book Cholesteatoma. It has been over a decade since a textbook has been dedicated to cholesteatoma surgery. Their book was based on their very popular instructional course titled Surgical Decision Making in Cholesteatoma Surgery, which they have been teaching at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery for 10-plus years. Although this book is relatively short (150 pages), it is both a comprehensive text and how-to book on the management of the myriad scenarios encountered in cholesteatoma therapy. It is well organized and extensively illustrated. The illustrations are probably the highlight of the book and include colorful Anthony Pazos drawings, diagrams, intraoperative photos, computed tomography/magnetic resonance imaging scans, as well as 25 online surgical videos. If you are a visual learner, like me, you will love this book.

Chapter 1 includes anatomy and pathophysiology as well as sections on preoperative evaluation, counseling, and postoperative care. Chapters 2 through 5 go over routine (if there is such a thing) cholesteatoma surgery, including, tympanoplasty, ossicular reconstruction, mastoidectomy (canal wall up and canal wall down), meatoplasty, and cavity management.

Chapters 6 through 8 review distinctive situations encountered during surgery and are divided into anatomic issues, hearing issues, and controversies in cholesteatoma surgery. Anatomic issues reviewed include sections on oval window disease, sinus tympani disease, the collapsed middle ear space, dehiscent facial nerve canal, lateral semicircular canal fistula, giant cholesteatoma, and cerebrospinal fluid leak/encephalocele. Hearing issues include sections on the intact ossicular chain and variations of cholesteatoma presenting in the better hearing ear. Controversies include sections on canal wall up versus canal wall down surgery, timing, and necessity of second-look surgery, facial nerve monitoring, endoscopic surgery, and adequacy of follow-up.

Chapter 9 reviews the unique aspects of congenital cholesteatoma surgery. Chapter 10 tackles the vexing problem of recidivistic disease. Chapters 11 and 12 review complications—both from the disease process as well as from surgery itself.

This book is fairly complete, yet very concise in its approach to the topic of cholesteatoma. So often authors of textbooks cannot resist presenting their way as the only way. Such is not the case with Cholesteatoma. One of the more compelling aspects of the book is the authors’ portrayal of several differing viewpoints. This likely comes from having run the instructional course for so many years and having had multiple guest speakers for the course.

The 25 online videos are of very high quality. They are narrated by the authors and are expertly edited. Along with the illustrations in the text itself and the multiple clinical case presentations, the book is a very compelling multimedia presentation on the subject.

In summary, Drs. Smouha and Bojrab have put together the only true multimedia textbook on cholesteatoma in existence. It is a text that would benefit otolaryngology residents to read from cover to cover and would also be a great addition to the library of experienced ear surgeons.

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