
Temporal Bone Dissection Guide by Drs. Francis and Niparko is an excellent primer for the training otologic surgeon to learn how to safely dissect and operate within the temporal bone. The length of the manual is succinct (68 pages). Such a length is advantageous; it permits the trainee to rapidly assimilate and review knowledge about temporal bone dissection in a short time and still conveys critical information that the otologic surgeon must become familiar with. The authors have packed in numerous pearls of surgical wisdom for the trainee to learn and practice in their dissections.

The authors have dedicated the majority of this book to describing how to perform osseous work within the temporal bone. The book details the techniques of mastoidectomy, labyrinthectomy, and translabyrinthine and middle cranial fossa approaches to the internal auditory canal in four separate chapters. Explanations of technique are stepwise and easy to follow. Approximately half of the pages of the book are devoted to the mastoidectomy chapter, which is appropriate given that mastery of the mastoidectomy is the fundamental building block for training the otologic surgeon. Within the chapter, the authors have highlighted key pearls, potential pitfalls, and the rationale for technique in text boxes that the trainee should find especially helpful. The authors did not dedicate space in this book to describe middle ear otologic procedures, such as ossiculoplasty and stapedectomy, which the developing otologic surgeon could practice using the human cadaveric temporal bone.

The book’s introductory chapter conveys the requisite knowledge for effective and efficient use of the operating microscope and surgical drill. This short chapter is filled with pearls that trainees should revisit time and time again until they become second nature. The second chapter describes details of temporal bone anatomy in three formats: drawings convey information about surface anatomy, histologic sections are used to demonstrate the internal anatomy of the otic capsule, and patterns of temporal bone pneumatization are learned through computed tomography (CT) imaging. Knowledge of this anatomy serves as a guide to navigate the dissection of the temporal bone, and the format it is presented in serves as a convenient introduction to temporal bone histopathology and CT imaging. The concluding chapter of the book provides two assessment instruments that educators can use in the evaluation of trainees during mastoid dissection and surgery, which can then be used to guide the trainee on areas for further improvement.

Figures throughout the book are numerous, well detailed, and provide the reader with a visual reference to refer to while dissecting the temporal bone. They are printed in black and white, which is reasonable and appropriate given the subject matter. The background of the images is a dark gray color, which does decrease contrast in some illustrations. The book is printed in a spiral-bound format, which allows the pages to lie flat and will permit the trainee to review the text and figures by simply glancing over at the guide from their workstation.

Overall, Drs. Francis and Niparko’s book is an excellent manual for trainees beginning to learn the intricacies of temporal bone dissection.

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