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Extracorporeal renal surgery and autotransplantation

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In general, this book is a well written one. However, the small letters do not make it easy to read. It is almost exclusively written by the staff of the National Hospital of the University of Oslo, with major contributions from the surgeons from the transplant section of the Department of Surgery, and this is both the strength and the weakness of the book. It claims to be complete, with extensive elaboration on certain aspects of (patho)physiology, while completely omitting other aspects. Moreover, extracorporeal repair and renal autotransplantation are proposed as the one and only therapy for renovascular disease.

It should be acknowledged that the authors have accumulated a great deal of experience, having performed more than 500 autotransplantations, including 122 on patients who had this operation for atherosclerotic renal disease, which is a very unusual indication. They also report on an unusual number of combined procedures (e. g., renal autotransplantation with aneurysmectomy). This aspect of the book, together with remarks in other chapters, makes it quite subjective, a reflection of some very personal points of view. For example, the first chapter is not well balanced: the field that is being covered is simply

too broad. It is stated on page 3 that "in ostial lesions PTRA should be considered as the primary treatment, if necessary, supplemented by stent insertion". This is a personal view of the authors that is not supported in the literature, and yet this is not indicated as such. The concept of "ischemic nephropathy" is not properly referenced (page 4), and there is certainly more important information on the progression of RVD on renal function available than what is mentioned here. Chapter 2, on radiological investigations, also has weaknesses: MRA is not up-to-date and new technologies, such as intravascular Doppler, are not mentioned. The chapters on surgical technique are detailed, concise, and well worth reading. Still, it is strange that the authors find autotransplantation to be "the principal procedure for the surgical management of renal artery stenoses" at their hospital (page 27). While I certainly agree that everyone has a right to his or her own opinion, I feel that the authors should have indicated that other operations offer reasonable alternatives. A detail: it is not clear to me why the ureter is always divided and ureteroneocystostomy is performed; the alternative – leaving the ureter intact – is not even mentioned!

In chapter 6, the results of 144 autotransplantations in 122 patients are presented. It is not clear whether all procedures were technically successful (page 82). The intraoperative evaluation is not discussed (angiography and/or duplex ultrasound). The operative mortality of 7% is not low. The authors fail to explain why this extensive operation (average length almost 8 hours) is

the only solution for atherosclerotic disease. Functional results (around 80% cured/improved) are certainly not superior to those reported in other series using less extensive surgery. I was amazed to find that "autotransplantation is recommended for patients with an occluded artery". Again, no alternatives (hepatorenal, splenorenal, aortorenal, etc. reconstructions) are even mentioned.

In chapter 7, which is quite interesting, the results of treatment for fibrodysplastic disease are reported. Again, the literature could have been more thoroughly reviewed, e. g., to include a discussion of PTA as an alternative to surgery for fibrodysplasia. In discussing PTRA for fibrodysplasia, Weibull's study on atherosclerotic disease is mentioned (page 97); yet, several series larger than those reported in Table 7.1 are not mentioned.

In conclusion, for vascular surgeons who have to deal with renovascular disease, this book is certainly worth reading. The strengths of the book are the detailed descriptions of the various techniques of extracorporeal reconstruction and autotransplantation, and these are explained by a very experienced team. However, the chapters that review renovascular hypertension and ischemic nephropathy are not complete and often reflect the personal opinions of the authors rather than a general consensus. Moreover, alternative techniques and treatments are seldom mentioned. Given these reservations, I would consider the book recommended reading.

J. H. van Bockel, Leiden