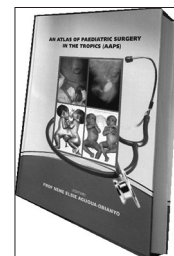


Review of an Atlas of Pediatric Surgery in the Tropics (AAPS)



Edition: First (2013)

Editor: Professor Nene Elsie Agugua-Obianyo

Publisher: Immaculate Publishers Ltd. Enugu, Nigeria

ISBN: 978-036-567-2

Children comprise 45% of the population in our sub-region; rarely do they attain or enjoy such percentage attention in the provision of health care. The publication of An Atlas of Pediatric Surgery in the Tropics (AAPS) is very timely and welcome. As far as I can testify, this is the first publication of such material in tropics. Edited by an intellectual colossus, a towering figure in Pediatric Surgery, the pioneer President of the Association of Pediatric Surgeons of Nigeria and an achiever of plural dimensions - Professor Nene Elsie Agugua-Obianyo - has brought her expertise and experience to bear on this publication. The title of the book is apt and descriptive, and clearly defines what it represents: “A perceptual aid to the study of pediatric surgery” and “to all who wish to study and retain the knowledge of pediatric surgery”.

The size and volume of this 304 paged book fall between a handbook and standard text, which makes it portable enough to be carried about and big enough to accommodate the contents. The choice of hardcover was well thought out; bearing in mind the frequent references it would be subjected by the users. The cover photographs and design are quite depictive of the specialty - combining a good color separation and simplicity typical of good medical publications. High quality gloss paper was used throughout the book. This is very appropriate for better picture quality and would be durable enough to withstand the wear and tear of frequent referencing.

The Editor carefully assembled an array of over 20 contributors drawn from across Nigeria and Ghana with ancillary specialist contributors from Plastic Surgery, Pediatrics, Orthopedics, Neurosurgery, Radiology, and Anesthesia. Many of the contributions are authorities in their respective fields. The book has a total African bias, both in content and author contribution. There is a distinct effort to encourage multiple authorship.

It is not surprising that the inspiration for this publication was conceived in the pioneer Department of Pediatric Surgery in Nigeria, which was started by our teacher, mentor, and doyen of Pediatric Surgery - Emeritus Professor Festus Nwako who also has written the foreword to this book. The department of Pediatric Surgery of the University of Nigeria and Teaching Hospital deserves our applause for their ground breaking expertise in the management of conjoined twins - their contribution to the literature is enviable. The next edition should include the qualifications of the contributors, in addition to their ranks.

Most standard surgical texts do not have enough materials on common pediatric surgical conditions. AAPS in the tropics does not pretend to replace a standard textbook, but be a very useful “companion” and fills a yawning gap of the paucity of clinical pediatric surgical conditions. This premier edition written in hardcover of 304 pages, single volume, is made up of 46 chapters subdivided into eight sections. The contents cut across a very wide spectrum of pediatric surgical conditions in the tropics in a very illuminating and instructive manner. Categorization of the sections is generally system-based except for Section 2 on “Trauma, Tumors and Twins” whose only common denominator is the letter “T”. In this section, conjoined twinning is discussed - well-illustrated in two appealing chapters.

The notes and illustrations under the systems cover all aspects of pediatric surgery - from congenital to acquired conditions and should be an asset for students studying for the Objective Structured Clinical Examination. Cleft lip and palate may be better discussed under Head and Neck. A short chapter on circumcision and complications would add tremendous value to the next edition as it is the most common procedure in children. Central nervous system is well covered with very illustrative pictures and line drawings. The muscular-skeletal section should include common bone tumors in children - osteosarcoma, etc.

An excellent inclusion is the fascinating section of anesthesia/intensive care unit. In discussing pediatric anesthesia, the motto of pediatric surgery is of paramount consideration. Motto: “Those children are not LITTLE adults”.

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DOI:
10.4103/2141-9248.133480

Their physiology and pathophysiology are completely different from adult. The surgeon expects his anesthetist to possess the three “A’s” - Ability, Availability, and Affability. Most important quality is “Availability”! On the other hand, the anesthetist appreciates a well-organized surgeon. The role of a competent pediatric anesthetist is paramount and cannot be overemphasized. Inclusion of pictures of nonpurely anesthetic devices such as pediatric blood bags, infusion pumps, solusets, cannulae, catheters, radiant warmer, etc., should make the Atlas richer.

The Imaging Technology section is rich, but some of the images, especially X-rays are of poor quality, perhaps digital X-rays may improve the picture quality.

The photographs and illustrations are largely of excellent quality, and indexing is very rich. Anonymity of the patients according to International Ethical Standard was ensured except for the Head and Neck lesions.

The pattern of referencing should be uniform - either further reading or references.

A few typographical mishaps survived scrutiny. There is no perfect book and the minor comments do not diminish the value of the effort, which remains “very positive”. The notes are written in simple clear and concise fashion with good fonts.

A well-packaged comprehensive review on almost all aspects of pediatric surgery in the tropics. Generally, well-structured up to date with short and succinct chapters superbly referenced. The book can assist the surgeon explain surgical conditions to patients/parents/guardians particularly when obtaining consent for a procedure. I congratulate the editor, contributors, and publishers on their practical, readable, informative, and visually appealing book. AAPS is highly recommended to all medical students, residents in all specialties, medical doctors, and nurses who come in contact with pediatric patient. It deserves a prominent place in all libraries, studies, and clinics. The most welcome addition to scholarship in pediatric surgery.

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