

This is no ordinary textbook. It is a compendium of recently published articles by this publisher, chosen because of their relevance to the highly focused topic of surgery of the airways. As such it is essentially an encyclopedia providing a worldwide perspective on a subject which is highly relevant, but not always familiar, to the practicing thoracic surgeon. I have no doubt that even the most highly experienced airway surgeons will find this volume both useful and enlightening, as it presents experience from many countries having different geographic, epidemiologic, and socioeconomic differences, affecting the nature, presentation and management of diseases and conditions which can involve the upper airways.

Even in the modern era of rapid transmission of new knowledge and the ability to instantaneously search worldwide references, familiarity with the knowledge and experience from other parts of the world is often limited. I am reminded of an experience I had in 1981 when, as a guest of the Soviet Union, I presented our experience at the Toronto General Hospital, using the median sternotomy approach for bilateral pulmonary procedures for both benign and malignant conditions. When asked afterward by famous senior Russian thoracic surgeon if we had done many such procedures I summoned what little modesty I may have had and said “We have done almost 20 cases.” His response to me was, “We have done almost 1000 cases”. I have no doubt as to his veracity and remember the feeling of embarrassment that I knew so little regarding the experience, and literature from other countries. Even now our awareness of new information may be circumscribed and the editors of this text are to be congratulated for compiling this valuable global resource.

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