

superb cadaveric dissection photographs, and excellent description of surgical techniques, this book will remain a learning and reference tool for many rhinologists and endoscopic skull base surgeons.

Disclosure

The author has no personal, financial, or institutional interest in any of the drugs, materials, or devices described in this article.

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Book Review: *SMART Approach to Spine Clinical Research*

By: Michael J. Lee, Daniel C. Norvell, Joseph R. Dettori, Andrea C. Skelly, Jens R. Chapman
Published by: Thieme Publishers, New York, NY, 2013
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The stated purpose of this book is “to assist you in planning a quality scientific study, regardless of research experience.” The

editors emphasize that the planning of a study is perhaps one of the most important aspects of producing quality clinical research. To appropriately plan a worthwhile investigation, the SMART-B approach is advocated. SMART-B is an acronym for study question, searching the literature, study design, measurements, analysis, resources, timing, and bias reduction. The first 8 chapters of the text are used to detail the SMART-B approach. The ninth and final chapter does not directly discuss items related to study planning but rather consists of topics that may be of interest to a clinical investigator such as guidance on manuscript preparation and how to interpret meta-analyses. In addition to an outline, each chapter begins with a few pertinent remarks such as “A goal without a plan is just a wish.” There are relevant figures, and important concepts or examples are summarized in single highlighted sentences throughout each chapter. This format is effective in maintaining the reader's attention and conveying the important details of what could be considered fairly dry material. A concise summary is also present at the end of each chapter.

The first chapter is a brief overview of the SMART-B approach, emphasizing the importance of the components and how they contribute to developing a sound clinical study. Chapters 2 through 8 provide a more comprehensive explanation of each aspect of the SMART-B algorithm. As an example, Chapter 2 recommends using the patients, intervention, comparison, and outcomes method to develop the most appropriate study question for evaluating a potential surgical treatment. The importance of a literature search and the method to construct an appropriate search of existing databases such as PubMed is the basis of Chapter 3. Chapter 4 discusses the 2 basic types of study designs, descriptive and analytic. Factors influencing selection of the best study design are discussed. The 4 categories of measurements are discussed in Chapter 5, with particular emphasis on patient-reported outcomes. Power analysis and sample size planning, as well as descriptive and analytical statistics, are the main concepts presented in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 details the need for appropriate collaborators, funding, and timing of a study. Chapter 8 discusses the various forms of bias (ie, performance bias) that can occur and suggests means to minimize each bias. Chapter 9, “Special Topics,” is the longest chapter, covering somewhat disparate but interesting topics, including manuscript preparation, heterogeneity of treatment effects, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and healthcare policy, among others.

Overall, this text accomplishes its main goal of guiding the spine care professional in designing a high-level clinical study. The SMART-B approach seems to be a straightforward algorithm that encompasses all the key aspects to be considered in planning a focused and achievable investigation. Information gleaned from this book will also improve the reader's ability to critically evaluate the literature. The text is easily readable because the concepts are presented in concise sections with appropriate case examples. The downside of these brief, readable sections, however, is the lack of detail given for certain concepts. As an example, in Chapter 5,



validity, reliability, and responsiveness are introduced as factors that should be considered in the selection of an appropriate outcome to be measured in a study. Rather than explaining these concepts in detail, the chapter refers the reader to another text to obtain a deeper understanding. In a similar vein, although the text is helpful in constructing a study, there is not enough content to implement the planned investigation. For instance, study analysis is presented in Chapter 6, but there is not enough information provided to actually perform the appropriate statistical analysis. The authors acknowledge this lack of detail throughout the text. Given that the purpose of the text is the planning rather than implementation of a study, this lack of content is not necessarily surprising.

This book will be of most value to readers who are new to clinical research, and it is a worthwhile book for those who have experience in clinical studies.

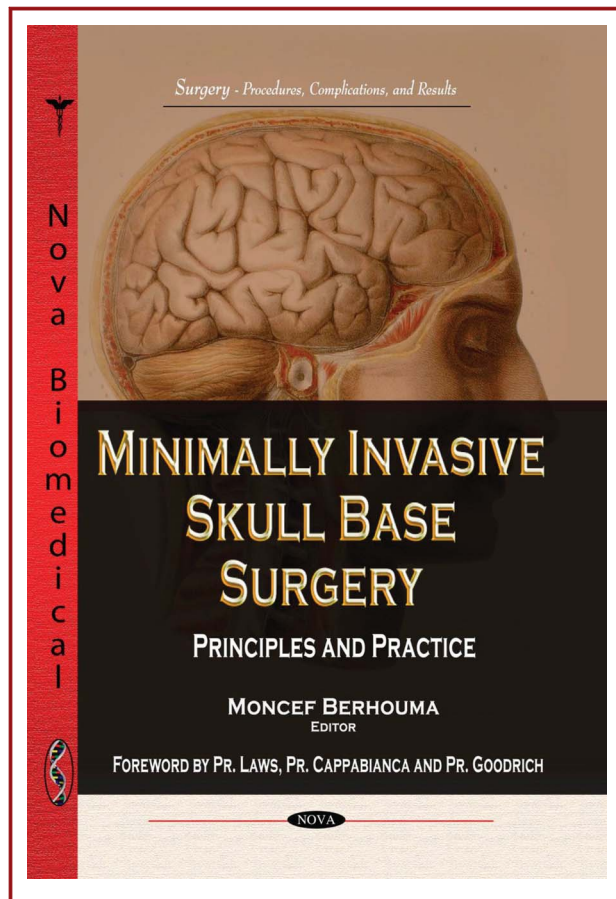
Disclosure

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Book Review: *Minimally Invasive Skull Base Surgery: Principles and Practice*

By: Moncef Berhouma

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In the past 10 to 15 years, the use of minimally invasive surgery has evolved from a revolutionary new technique to a common practice. In the newly published *Minimally Invasive Skull Base Surgery: Principles and Practice*, edited by Moncef Berhouma, MD, we have an excellent resource for those interested in enhancing their expertise or being introduced to the field of skull base surgery.

This volume is comprehensive and effectively organized with a systematic methodology covering, in considerable detail, “high-yield” pathologies involving the anterior, middle and posterior fossa; endoscopic approaches to the ventricles and brainstem; and the craniocervical junction, to name just a few of the topics

surveyed. Radiosurgery and percutaneous procedures are likewise fully addressed.

Many chapters begin by framing a historical context and surveying where we have been, where we are now, and where the future might lead us. The need for such a timely work cannot be overestimated. Physician and even patient interest in the integration of endoscopic techniques to skull base pathologies has grown exponentially in the last decade. This book summarizes such high-yield topics.

When confronted with a case of complex skull base pathology, neurosurgeons and otorhinolaryngologists have multiple options. These options include observation with serial imaging, open skull base vs minimal access endoscopic approaches, and radiation treatment. In making these decisions, the treating physician must educate the patient and the family regarding the natural history of the specific disease process, as well as the potential risks and benefits associated with each approach to treatment. This book is an invaluable aid during such consultations. The utility of the book is reflected in a detailed discussion of treatment paradigms. This work likewise covers the important history, epidemiology, surgical anatomy, and specific details regarding stepwise endoscopic techniques. In addition, outcome data are presented with an extensive bibliography for reference.