

## Book Review

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*Surgery of vertebrobasilar Aneurysms*, C.G. Drake, S.J. Peerless, J.A. Hernesniemi, Springer, New York, 1995, 329 pp., ISBN 3-211-82696-3

Drake and coworkers present their experience in surgery on aneurysms of the posterior circulation. For non neurosurgeons it must be mentioned that this special topic deals with the most hazardous and technically difficult operations within the field of neurosurgery.

The book is clearly organized in a chapter on history and then proceeds to the aneurysms according to their size and location. Finally particular aspects such as multiplicity, associated other vascular malformations, incidental aneurysms, age, timing of surgery, special anaesthetic management, endovascular treatment and complications are considered.

This book gives the reader an overview of the breathtaking history of aneurysm surgery, the extreme initial mortality and the gradual improvement of techniques leading to more confidence in dealing with this disorder.

The experience presented here is unparalleled worldwide. The treatment of 1767 posterior circulation aneurysms is presented in detail. The various surgical approaches are discussed and personal preferences are explained. Repeatedly the value of temporary clipping and care for the small perforator arteries is stressed. Timing is considered important but of lesser value than the experience of the surgical team. 1300 patients were operated on 14 days or more after the last subarachnoid hemorrhage. The follow-up was possible in most cases for a period of 8 years. While most aneurysms were clipped, other procedures such as wrapping and trapping were also used. Lowering of the blood pressure and inducing hypothermia were common intraoperative measures to facilitate clipping.

Mortality obviously depended mostly on preoperative clinical findings, size of aneurysm, their location and projection. Overall mortality was 6.6 %, an excellent outcome was achieved in 68.6 % of the cases. Clearly age also had an effect on the outcome. Endovascular treatment is finally mentioned but ruled to be preserved “for patients in special circumstances”.

This book is unique. It gives a detailed account of the largest series of posterior circulation aneurysms ever and it is highly unlikely that anybody will be able to repeat this success story. Each aspect of this surgery is dealt with in a most didactic and comprehensive way. Illustrations, mostly angiographic findings, are interspersed throughout the book. They are of good quality. This book sets a standard that for a long time will be a yardstick to all neurosurgeons operating on these aneurysms. It will be invaluable for further developments in endovascular interventions, which will have to be measured with this yardstick especially in terms of late outcome. It should therefore be available not only to neurosurgeons but also to the neuroradiologist, who is interested in endovascular interventions.

**Prof. Dr. med. R. Firsching**

Klinik fuer Neurochirurgie  
Otto-von-Guericke-Universitaet Magdeburg  
Leipziger Str. 44  
39120 Magdeburg  
Germany  
TEL.: +49-391-6715534  
FAX: +49-391-6715544  
E-MAIL: neurochirurgie@uni-magdeburg.de