

BOOK REVIEW

Thieme Atlas of Anatomy, Volume 3: Head, Neck and Neuroanatomy, 2nd edn

By M. Schuenke, E. Schulte, U. Schumacher; Consulting Editors: B. R. MacPherson, C. Stefan. (ISBN 978-1-62623-120-7.) New York, Stuttgart, Delhi, Rio de Janeiro: Thieme Medical Publishers. 2016.

The second edition of *The Thieme Atlas of Anatomy: Volume 3 Head, Neck and Neuroanatomy* is an exceptional book that combines very detailed and accurate illustrations of the region with relevant applied and clinical anatomy.

The intricate anatomical details of the head and neck and the neuroanatomy regions are generally considered by most students as complex and difficult to understand. This atlas will serve as an excellent reference guide for all, especially those seeking in-depth anatomical knowledge and relevant applied anatomy. Information is provided in an easy-to-understand manner. It groups together all skeletal elements, muscular elements, neurovascular structures and organs. This might make it difficult for a student unfamiliar with these regions, especially if used as a standalone textbook. But when used alongside a regular anatomy textbook, which presents anatomy in a region-wise topographical fashion, or when used as a reference book, one immediately begins to realise and appreciate the value of such a comprehensive atlas.

Each topic in *The Thieme Atlas of Anatomy: Head, Neck and Neuroanatomy* is laid out as a two-page spread that allows the reader easy access to all illustrations and relevant information on the topic without the need to turn pages to assimilate it all. The illustrations themselves are of very high quality and benefit from having just the right number of labels per illustration. Illustrations of bones and soft tissue are realistic and anatomically accurate. There are also innumerable diagrams that serve to explain key concepts and to link these to the anatomy of the region. The book also presents photographs, for instance of the oral cavity in relation to anatomical aspects of dental anaesthesia, or a view of the laryngeal inlet after intubation, and images of relevant clinical investigations, for example scintigrams of the thyroid gland.

Going far beyond a regular anatomy atlas, the Thieme's atlas elaborates (but does not over-complicate) the relevant embryology, physiology, and clinical and applied anatomy. Examples include a full two-page spread on embryology of the face with reference to cleft lip and palate, physiology of sound conduction in the ear, and stenosis and occlusions of arteries supplying the brain, to name just a few.

In this respect, the comprehensive nature of the book makes it a very handy reference guide for postgraduate

students of anatomy and also clinical postgraduate trainees preparing for postgraduate exams that often comprise basic science content relevant to their specialty (e.g. Part I Royal College Exams) as all relevant information is at their fingertips on the two-page spread.

The interactive online learning tool that is available free to students who purchase this book comprises an online image bank of the illustrations in the atlas and also a self-test quiz, which will prove invaluable for revision purposes.

There are a very few things that I believe this book would benefit from at next revision, such as developing sections focused on radiological anatomy. The close relationship between clinical radiology and anatomy is well recognised. Moreover, with rapidly enhancing technology and cutting-edge imaging techniques enabling visualisation of structures with increasing detail and definition, incorporating radiology into the curriculum at an early stage of a course may serve as a valuable resource to teach anatomy, and would also help healthcare students understand the role of imaging within the patient pathway.

Another suggestion would be to incorporate clinical boxes that would allow applied and clinical information to stand out and make it even more easily accessible.

Some applied anatomy concepts could be simplified; for example, in section 5.16D an illustration showing the action of the extrinsic ocular muscles on the bulb is similar to those present in many anatomy textbooks, but may be confusing for undergraduate students as this almost appears to conflict with the next image (5.16E) showing directions of gaze. One suggestion might be to list actions of muscles on a table and to retain only the illustration 5.16E as this would be easier to understand and digest from a junior student's perspective.

Overall I have no hesitation in recommending this atlas as a handy one-stop reference guide to students of all health-care-related specialties, which will provide them with an understanding of structures, their relationships with surrounding structures, and relevant clinical and functional aspects. As the authors mention in their preface, this book does really combine the very best of a clinically oriented text and an atlas.

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