BOOK REVIEW:

Patellofemoral Pain, Instabilty, and Arthritis: Clinical Presentation, Imaging, and Treatment

Editors: Stefano Zaffagnini, David Dejour, Elizabeth A. Arendt, Springer 2010

This book was initiated by the editors and originates from discussions at the European Society of Sports Traumatology, Knee Surgery and Arthroscopy (ESSKA) meeting. Dr. Dejour is associated with the Lyon medical school in France that is renowned for work on the patellofemoral joint especially trochlear dysplasia and osteotomies. Dr. Arendt from Minneapolis, USA is also a familiar name in the specialty, particularly on the subject of the medial patellofemoral ligament. More than 35 authors (a good mix of orthopaedic surgeons, physiotherapists and researchers from Europe and the USA) contributed to this book -- some authors as well as all of the editors are members of the International Patellofemoral Study Group.

This book is basically an international reflection on patellofemoral disorders, and promotes an open view on this controversial area with an attempt to reach global consensus based on a review of the literature. Most chapters provide good concluding summaries. Although it can be difficult to organize a book of this sort, the chapters flow satisfactorily, starting of with pathophysiology, clinical presentation, imaging and instructional surgical procedures, and ending with two good chapters regarding postoperative management and errors and complications of surgery followed by, oddly enough, by patellofemoral problems in skeletally immature patients. The useful dictionary represents a good effort towards standardization of terminology, but should have been more extensive. Although a consensus and discussion meeting to minimise overlap of material took place, there still exists some overlap of material. Some overlap is unavoidable and may not be a bad thing. For example, although the normal Q angle, femoral neck anteversion and tibial torsion were not presented in the clinical examination chapter, the significance and limitation of these measurements as well as normal values are discussed in other chapters.

Patellofemoral pain has been called the back pain of the knee, presumably due to the inherent difficulty in identifying aetiology. Moreover, it is a very common cause of an orthopaedic consult. However, despite this high incidence and the abundance of research the pathogenesis of patellofemoral pain remains an enigma. Of relevance, the first chapter of this book addresses the pathophysiology of anterior knee pain and introduces recent histochemical work. This chapter may contain a little too much science for the general reader but emphasizes the various factors involved in the genesis of pain. On the other hand, one should not oversimplify the discussion by equating patellofemoral malalignment to anterior knee pain.

My incentive for reading this book (in addition to preparing this book review) is many fold. Recently, I have been treating increasing numbers of patients with patellofemoral conditions. As I am actively involved in research, I was curious to see in what context one of my works was quoted, and also wished to broaden my knowledge base. Having read the book, I feel this it should have wide appeal. The fundamental chapters on clinical presentation, imaging, examination and non-operative treatment will be of interest to the general orthopaedist. Admittedly, some chapters are very specific and may only be of interest to those involved in research or sports / knee surgeons who perform very specialized surgery. These are instructional chapters with enough detail and illustrations for those training to perform surgery. For more traditional surgical procedures, there are good chapters on the Elmslie-Trillat technique and the role of lateral retinacular release as well as Fulkerson's philosophy and experience with tubercle osteotomy. For those with an inclination to arthroplasty, there is a chapter on prosthetic indications. Surgeons keen on autologous chondrocyte implantation for cartilage lesions will be encouraged by the satisfactory long-term results presented by the Swedish group.

The book is relatively light but covers a broad range of topics from the young child to the elder patient with arthritis. It is a good reference for orthopaedic surgeons, sports medicine physicians and physiotherapists.

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