

Textbook of Otitis Media: The Basics and Beyond

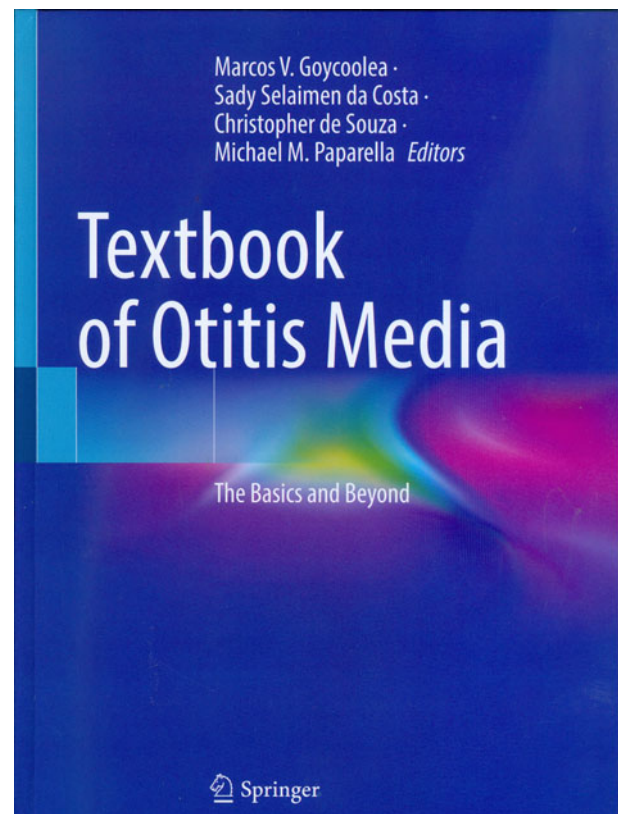
M V Goycoolea, S Selaimen da Costa, C de Souza, M M Paparella (eds)
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I must admit that I had not expected a book with this title (reminiscent of Buzz Lightyear, I thought) to be all of 730 A4 pages, weighing in at over 5 lbs. The titles of the 64 chapters do show just how much there actually is to say on the topic, whether basic sciences, the pathology of otitis media, the development and complications of cholesteatoma or, perhaps of greatest interest to our readers, its surgical management.

Some chapter titles immediately catch the eye. “Critical Appraisal of Published Research in Otitis Media or How to Sort the Wheat from the Chaff” was as entertaining as this heading suggested. It proved a personal favourite and one that I will return to.

Early in the book there is much very advanced discussion of immunology and genetics. A chapter on “Genetics and Otitis Media”, which contained many a table listing the “Alphabet Soup” that characterises genes such as MIR205HG, seemed indecipherable at first glance. A well-written introduction prompted me to struggle on and I was rewarded by learning the otologic perils of hailing from Minnesota, Finland or Western Australia. The book is truly all encompassing in its coverage and, inevitably, a few chapters will appeal more to the laboratory scientist than the clinician. The suspicion of an underlying immune deficiency associated with otitis media is generally all that is required of us, followed by referral to the paediatric experts. Despite that, this chapter did again make for easy and instructive reading. Frankly this is what the more senior of us should be reading, rather than how to wield a drill slightly differently.

It is not until page 527 and Chapter 48 that we get to surgical management, but now every conceivable approach to tympanoplasty and mastoidectomy merits its own chapter. Some rely on coloured diagrams but some, especially the chapter on underlay myringoplasty, carry excellent colour microscope photographs to illustrate the step-by-step approach. Such photography is not easy, but the challenge is well met here. There is possibly some excessive information (e.g., in a chapter “Tympanoplasty: The Inlay Technique, Step by Step”, which carries over seven pages of a single table, listing every study of relevance (over 100), from 1998 to 2021, with



their associated outcomes). This journal is not above such an error to be honest, as you may have noticed of late.

The book ends suddenly with “Subtotal Petrosectomy” and I feel the massive text merited a closing chapter as a summary and discussion of recent advances and future prospects, as are presented throughout the book. There is actually a very nice Preface, but curiously it is unclear which of the editors the author is (although we can guess).

This is an important new text, from publishers who have contributed massively to our speciality, as a glance at their website makes clear. I think it is pitched more towards the experienced senior than the novice trainee, but it does have something for everyone. It is much more “Beyond” than “Basics” and benefits from that. Do not be deterred by the more scientific chapter titles. Therein lies the novelty and they prove much more enlightening than might be expected.

L M Flood
Middlesbrough, UK