MRI Essentials for the Spine Specialist

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This 300-page textbook aims to be of relevance to all medical healthcare professionals involved in the management of patients with spinal disorders. The editor is an American orthopaedic surgeon, who oversees a multidisciplinary list of contributors. Sections cover introductory topics such as MRI physics, anatomy and clinical correlation, pathology of the spine, and then ‘special conditions’ such as advanced MRI imaging. There is liberal use of good quality illustrations and MR images to illustrate the succinct text, which covers many of the important spinal topics, including trauma, degeneration, infection and tumour. A short chapter on paediatric spine outlines the main pathologies affecting this age group.

There is relatively little on the imaging of the inflammatory arthropathies, with no mention of the changes of seronegative spondyloarthropathy or how MRI helps in the diagnosis, and nothing on coccydynia.

Clinical questions (and answers) at the end of every chapter gives the reader a chance to recap on important information in an interactive fashion.

I found the chapter on clinical and correlative pain generators a good revision on the clinical aspects of back pain. Indeed, the important correlation of clinical and radiological findings is continually stressed throughout the book, as is the value of correlating MRI with other imaging modalities, with a separate chapter devoted to this topic.

A comprehensive, well-illustrated description of the various types of disc disease arms the reader with the correct terminology to accurately describe these lesions. Pleasingly, there is a chapter regarding MRI safety considerations for the referring clinician, discussing important topics such as nephrogenic systemic fibrosis and device compatibility.

In summary, this short textbook is an excellent introduction to the clinical and radiological aspects of spinal imaging. In keeping with its aims, I feel it is most useful for clinicians and those starting to report MRI studies of these regions.

This book can be purchased through the RAD Magazine Book Service at the discounted rate of £78.75. (Price correct as at November 11, 2014).
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