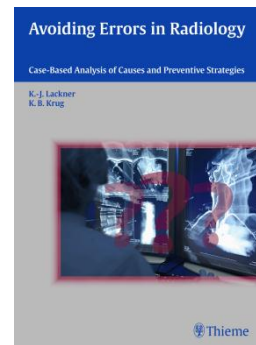


Avoiding Errors in Radiology

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Publisher: Thieme
Price: €109.95
ISBN: 978-3-13-153881-9
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This German monograph is essentially a translation of the German edition that was initially published in 2009. The topic of errors in medicine has been a subject of much debate in the 21st century. Much of the discussion and argument regarding error in medicine has been fuelled by articles and television programmes, and the media scrutiny of hospital errors has led to the healthcare profession taking a rearguard action by reviewing and tightening clinical governance procedures. It is important to remember that with any human endeavour it will not be possible to completely avoid mistakes.

In the field of radiology there can be no radiologist practising who will not be prone to making occasional errors. In fact, many medical discoveries have occurred as a result of errors. Charles Dotter, the father of interventional radiology, discovered angioplasty in ‘error’ – he actually dissected a vessel and then realised the false channel could be opened up by balloons. It would be a great shame if today’s and tomorrow’s pioneers are prevented from advancing medicine forward because of current society’s obsession with excessive regulation.

Nevertheless, it is also important that healthcare professions endeavour to do their best to minimise errors and also learn from the mistakes that do occur. The way to do this is to recognise one’s mistakes, to discuss them openly in a non-hostile manner and to learn from them and perhaps develop prevention strategies not all of which will be foolproof unfortunately.

This timely textbook fills a gap in a fairly niche but important market. The authors have taken approximately 120 cases of errors that have occurred in image analysis and used these cases to form the basis of the book. Each case starts with the clinical history and clinical examination findings accompanied by the appropriate imaging. The error analysis and strategies for error prevention are described.

There are several tables, appropriate diagrams, images and text which all provide an excellent learning experience. The cases are also referenced for further reading. The book is divided into sections including the central nervous system, the chest, breast, abdomen, spinal column, musculo-skeletal and the vascular system. A wide gamut of common and uncommon errors are included.

This is an excellent textbook for all radiologists to read and learn from. The authors have done the radiology community a great service by producing this work.

It is important, however, to keep everything in perspective. Error in radiology is nothing new. In 1901 an anonymous author in the Lancet wrote that reading images could result in error and dispute. Much has been written over the years by numerous authors, particularly Dr L Berlin in the USA, regarding errors in radiological practice.

Today most radiologists are aware that errors can be classified into perception, interpretation, knowledge, management and communication errors. They are seldom due to one thing and often due to a combination of factors including work environment, clinical information available and appropriate communication. It is also important that people are made aware of the principles of inter and intra observer variation in reporting which was described as early as 1947 in a study of chest radiography for analysis and detection of tuberculosis.

One of the earliest monographs to be written on the subject of radiology error was by M J Smith who wrote a book in 1967 entitled 'Error and variation in diagnostic radiology.' "Plus ça change, mais c'est la même chose," you may think.

This current volume by the German authors from Cologne is a timely addition to the literature on the subject. It will provide a useful textbook for radiologists to browse through and we will all hopefully learn from their mistakes as well as the ones we make.