

BOOK REVIEW

Anatomy for the FRCA

J. Bowness, A. Taylor

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2019. Pp. 180.

Price £21.30. ISBN 978-1-108-70188-4

Although not a book designed to be read cover-to-cover, Bowness and Taylor's *Anatomy for the FRCA* nevertheless contains a wealth of useful information for junior (and even some senior) anaesthetists to aid the learning of crucial anatomy underpinning anaesthetic practice.

The authors, both practising anaesthetists, have written the book specifically for readers undertaking the Primary and Final Fellowship examinations of the Royal College of Anaesthetists (FRCA) to cover the anatomy curriculum for post-graduate anaesthesia training in the UK. The book serves as a valuable reference resource for clinicians wanting to revise clinical anatomy and those wanting to refresh the sonoanatomy relevant to commonly-performed regional anaesthetic techniques, such as brachial plexus blocks for upper limb surgery.

The first four chapters of the book are set out as an examination paper, with each chapter asking the questions in a different FRCA style. There are 12 short answer questions, 18 objective structured clinical examination stations, three final science structured oral examination questions, and 60 multiple choice questions. Each question has a suggested mark allocation to guide the reader on the depth of answer the examiner would be looking for. In the remaining chapters of the book, there are detailed explanations of the answers accompanied by coloured annotated drawings, photographs of cadaveric material and skeletal models, and labelled ultrasound images to aid with the clinical application of the knowledge.

The book is highly illustrated in colour, with a range of detailed images and drawings that are comprehensively annotated. Candidates can either focus on the particular question type relevant to their upcoming examination, or simply use the index as a reference for a specific anatomical area, making it relatively easy to navigate and ensure that the revision is relevant to them. It uses the familiar 'SLIMRAG' acronym (standing for 'sterility, light, intravenous access, monitoring, resuscitation equipment, assistant, general anaesthetic if required'), an excellent aide memoire reinforcing a systematic approach when answering almost any

procedural question.¹ The paperback book is slim and lightweight, with concise and compact information allowing easy portability alongside other revision books, and serving as a handy refresher of the anatomy underpinning regional anaesthetic techniques. It is therefore suitable to be used by trainees as a guide for viva practice to quiz their trainees between cases in the operating theatre, or by trainees for quick revision in the coffee room on their breaks.

Unfortunately, because of its modest size, the images are sometimes a little small and the annotations difficult to read. In terms of structure, there appears to be no systematic order to the anatomy questions presented; for example, the femoral triangle is followed by a question on the internal jugular vein, which some readers may find illogical when using as a reference text. The level of detail explaining exact instructions for some of the regional anaesthetic techniques is less complex than some may like. However, the purpose of the book is not to teach regional techniques, but simply highlight the relevant anatomy and broad principles to achieve a pass in the examinations. The readers may benefit from larger images, although this would be at the expense of the convenient lightweight and slim-fit style that appeals to trainees transporting textbooks to and from work.

The book is the first of its kind in providing specific FRCA exam anatomy revision, negating the need for spending considerable time with larger and more complex anatomy textbooks, which are aimed at a more general audience outside of anaesthesia. It offers a vast range of commonly asked questions and relates the anatomy to everyday anaesthetic practice, ensuring consolidation of the knowledge and increasing the reproducibility in examinations.

Anatomy can appear in all parts of the FRCA examination, and is renowned for being a difficult and poorly answered section of the examination, rendering it particularly daunting to revise. This comprehensive and targeted study guide covers the majority of anatomy topics tested, and features the salient points relevant to anaesthesia and the clinical application, with a particular focus on potential complications during regional techniques.

Overall, this book provides a valuable question base for anaesthesia trainees in their preparations for the anatomy covered in fellowship examinations, and should be considered an essential supplementary resource alongside the core physics, physiology, and pharmacology textbooks.

Charlotte L. Smith*, Danny J.N. Wong and Huw Thomas
London, UK

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: charlottel smith24@gmail.com

References

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doi: [10.1016/j.bja.2020.12.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bja.2020.12.012)