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# Foreword

It is 8 PM on a Thursday evening. I just finished my last case of the day after a very busy week. I have a difficult case scheduled tomorrow requiring a technique which I haven't used in a while. I need to review before that case, but I'm tired and have little time or desire to do that. How often have you found yourself in that situation? What you need then is a brief, condensed summary of everything you need to know for that case. Or as detective Joe Friday on *Dragnet* would say, "Just the facts ma'am."

The *Handbook of Spine Surgery*, now in its third edition, is exactly that compendium. Presented in a bullet point format, you get relevant anatomy, indications for the procedure, advantages of the technique, preoperative imaging, step-by-step technique description, common complications, considerations specific to individual patients, expected outcome, surgical tips and pearls, and the answers to common questions. Critically, these can all be read and digested in 10 minutes. Something you can do even on a Thursday night when you're tired.

This handbook covers all spine surgical anatomy and procedures commonly performed. It is completely up-to-date, even including very newly described techniques. Each chapter is authored by surgeons with known expertise in the area about which they are writing, creating a virtual "who's who" of spine surgery. As a result, this handbook is a "must have" for every surgeon, fellow, resident, and medical student pursuing spine surgery as a career. Drs. Baaj, Mummaneni, Uribe, Vaccaro, and Greenberg are to be congratulated on contributing an important text to spine surgery. Thank them for enabling you to enjoy that Thursday night...

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# Foreword

It was once said that more important than the **incision** is the **decision**. Although this is quite true and workup and evaluation of the spinal patient in the clinic are critically important, the surgical techniques and ancillary tools we use to perform those techniques have become increasingly complicated in recent years. Our diagnostic capabilities have improved and our knowledge of outcomes and what interventions work well is challenging in spinal surgery, and knowledge in this regard has also evolved significantly. With less invasive techniques becoming quite common and more accessible, it remains incredibly important that our trainees and practitioners early in practice still understand the basics and anatomical concepts related to spinal pathology.

In this book, Dr. Baaj and contributors have created a truly comprehensive approach to spinal pathologies and their treatment. What I am particularly enamored by is the full extent to which the reader is going to be able to understand the anatomy, the tools in the perioperative diagnosis and the treatment and after-treatment of spinal disease, the particulars related to each pathology, and the technical perils for performing the surgery. The book is divided into four parts with the first part being the basic anatomy. Part II relates to all the tools we use for diagnosis including physical examination, electrodiagnosis, imaging, etc. Also included are the tools for improving safety in spinal surgery such as neuromonitoring and the tools to use after surgery during recovery. Part III is based specifically on various common spinal pathologies and physiologic problems such as congenital, trauma, infection, tumor, degenerative disease, radiculopathy, myelopathy, deformity, and spondylar arthropathies. Finally, Part IV delves into the exact techniques and how to perform these techniques that are important for performance of spinal surgery.

It is obvious after reading the above that the book is one of the most comprehensive treatises on spinal pathology. In one stop we can learn the anatomy, the pathology, the techniques both for diagnosis and treatment, and the pitfalls associated with all of the above. I congratulate the authors on delivering for us a comprehensive text that will help those who are students of spinal surgery, as well as practitioners who are attempting to take care of our challenging patients.

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