

Foreword

The opening sentence says it all: "Radiology can be a lot of fun!" It summarizes what is unique about this book.

Radiology books designed for medical students have as their main purpose an introduction to the science and art of medical imaging. Behind this obvious purpose is an implicit intent also to fascinate students, and thereby to inspire some of the most susceptible and capable to choose a career in radiology. An early attempt to inspire students grew out of a classroom medical student teaching program, in which the radiologist Lucy Frank Squires was assisted by students and radiology trainees like myself. That course was wildly successful and attracted many students to a lifetime interest in radiology. What made this program unique was its light-hearted approach and the use of everyday household objects to explain radiological principles to the students, and to make them feel comfortable in the process.

This text by George W. Eastman, Chris Wald, and Jane Crossin is, in many ways, an extension of that successful humanistic formula for medical student teaching. The authors have captured our attention by introducing the subject through the eyes of fictional medical students to whom they have given form, substance, and personalities with emotions and fears. Although fictional, the characters are realistic in their foibles. What is new and different in this book is its clever use of these students to make us inquisitive about them as well as the real subject matter. This process relieves some of the inherent dryness of the topic by involving our hearts in the sharing of the uncertainties and concerns of the characters, and it captures our attention.

The thread of human connection to our fictional students weaves its way through the book. In the introduction we learn of the diverse backgrounds of the students, something of their private lives, and gain an inkling of their interactions with each other. In the chapter on chest radiology, we sympathetically experience the challenge of the subject material through their eyes.

The complexity of modern radiology is reflected in the organization and content of the book. The students' introduction to radiology starts with technical aspects of basic image acquisition and extends to the fundamentals of psychophysics in image perception, an important topic often overlooked in radiology texts. What follows includes principles of disease detection, disease diagnosis, and appropriate examination selection. As one who was a radiology trainee in the 1960s, I never cease to be amazed at how simple life was at that time. One chose between either film radiography or fluoroscopy; there was nothing else but nuclear medicine, which was then still in its infancy. Now, the wide range of imaging modalities makes it essential to learn how to choose between them to make the best use of imaging.

For this voyage of the medical student into the world of radiology, the authors have set sail toward a unique polar star that encompasses humanism as well as comprehensive imaging science. The text promises to introduce and guide a new generation of students into the fascinating world of radiological imaging.

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