

Removable Partial Dentures

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London: Quintessence Publishing Co., Ltd., 2004.
140 pp. Illus., indexed.
\$54.00 hardcover
ISBN 1-85097-075-0

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This book is a recent publication in the 36-volume “Quintessentials for General Dental Practitioner Series,” which is designed to cover the “basic principles and key issues in all aspects of modern dental medicine.”

Dr. Jepson does an admirable job with a difficult subject: the conventional removable partial denture. This book is brief and well organized, consisting of 140 pages with 175 clinical photographs and 37 well-executed illustrations. The paper, binding, printing, and quality of photography are superior—all factors we have come to expect and appreciate from books produced by this publisher.

In content, the book is conveniently divided into two parts. Chapters 1-7 deal with the fundamentals of planning and designing removable partial dentures with emphasis on the clinical implications of decision making. Chapters 8-11 deal with the details of the clinical application of the previously developed treatment plan.

Each chapter follows a basic pattern that begins with the “Aim” of the chapter and the desired learning “Outcome.” Thereafter, each chapter varies depending on the subject matter. At the end of each chapter, the reader’s attention is focused on “Key Points,” a condensed review of its three to five most important points.

The first chapter, “Partial Denture Provision,” deals with the interesting demographics of the partial denture patient population, a subject not usually developed and sometimes not even considered in many larger standard textbooks. The “Key Points” at the end of this chapter are:

- More people will retain some of their own teeth into old age, and the number of teeth retained will increase.
- The future need for partial dentures to restore aesthetic and functional limitations will increase.
- The long-term use of partial dentures is associated with an increased incidence of caries and periodontal disease.
- Replacement of missing front teeth is the main factor motivating the use of partial dentures. Improved mastication is of secondary importance.
- The provision of partial dentures should be based on a patient’s perceived need.

With this practical platform as a launching point, Dr. Jepson in subsequent chapters develops the idea of a “functionally oriented approach.” “Traditionally,” he says, “the replacement of all missing teeth was thought to preserve function and maintain occlusal stability—the concept of arch integrity.” However, “evidence describes . . . a ‘functional dentition’ as one with 21 or more teeth or, more specifically, one with at least three pairs of opposing posterior teeth.” His conclusion is that “a functionally oriented approach will result in a reduced but more effective provision of partial dentures.” In a nutshell, we should make partial dentures “based on a patient’s perceived need” rather than on the mere fact that some teeth are missing. Not all missing teeth need to be replaced.

Throughout the book, the procedures of examination, diagnosis, partial denture design, and construction follow well-established and accepted techniques with the goal of producing a comfortable, functional, esthetic, and stable prosthesis. The discussion of transitional partial dentures in chapter 7 is especially well done. The author states unequivocally that “designing partial dentures is a clinician’s responsibility and should

not be delegated to the dental technician.” This is the long-sought-after ideal of academic dentistry but is seldom consistently achieved in real life by the general dentist. I believe a more achievable goal would be to acknowledge that most partial dentures are the design product of a consultation between the dentist and a dental laboratory technician. Several clinically related descriptions of procedure could be beneficially expanded because of their critical importance to the outcome. These include 1) making the master impression, 2) producing the master cast, and 3) preparing the laboratory work order/prescription.

This book is succinct, practical, clinically oriented, and pleasant to read. It would be an excellent addition to the professional library of any general dentist providing removable partial dentures for patients. It would also be suitable for a dental student or for the specialty practitioner seeking a condensed and evidence-based review. Perhaps the ultimate compliment to this author is to say that I bought the book and enjoyed reading it before being asked to review it!

Wolf-Heidegger’s Atlas of Human Anatomy, Vols. 1 and 2, 6th ed.

Petra Kopf-Maier
Basel, Switzerland: Karger,
2005.
353 pp. (Vol. 1), 493 pp. (Vol. 2).
Illus., indexed.
\$136 hardcover
ISBN 3-8055-7667-6

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The newest version of this atlas offers numerous additions to previous editions. In particular, it significantly improves and expands the materials most often used in a gross anatomy course for dental students. The atlas begins appropriately with an “homage to those who bequeathed their bodies to science.” Our gross anatomy course begins and concludes with recognition of the anatomical donors, and I am always impressed with authors who encourage expression of this gratitude in their textbooks.

Most of the high-quality color figures in the atlas are drawings, which, in my opinion, offer the most effective teaching tool for the novice student, because the anatomical structures are usually more clearly demarcated in drawings than in photographs of dissections. The contrasting colors chosen for the anatomical figures simplify the discernment of the internal anatomical structures. The anatomical figures are uncluttered and contain only the essential labeling. The terminology in this edition is based on *Terminologia Anatomica*, often with various synonyms, which are also cross-referenced to the preferred term. This feature is extremely important for the dental student, who is often required to assimilate numerous terms (both clinical and anatomical) for a single anatomical feature.

Both volumes have an extensive table of contents and subject index, but do not have extensive descriptive text. Thus, an appropriate gross anatomy textbook is required as a companion volume for students.

Volume 2 contains chapters describing the head and neck, thorax, abdomen, pelvis, and central nervous system anatomy. In addition, the eye and ear structures are extensively described. Both volumes contain numerous parasagittal, paracoronal, and cross-sectional figures, which are often matched to X-ray plates and radiological images (ultrasound, CT scans, and MRI). Taken together, these matches serve as an excellent tool for teaching radiographic interpretation. Both volumes of the atlas also contain numerous illustrations of the surface anatomy of each region of the body.