

Preface

Advances in trauma care have resulted in improved survival of many severely injured patients. These advances include “damage control surgery” or “abbreviated laparotomy” with abdominal packing as well as the recognition of the abdominal compartment syndrome. As part of damage control surgery, and for the treatment of the abdominal compartment syndrome, the abdomen is frequently left open. Damage control has been extended to the management of life-threatening intra-abdominal bleeding and severe intra-abdominal sepsis, resulting in an increase in the prevalence of the open abdomen among emergency surgery cases. The historical background and pathophysiologic mechanisms at play are outlined in the three chapters.

Although the numbers of “open abdomens” are decreasing due to changes in resuscitation and transfusion practices, it still represents a complex complication that can be challenging to deal with. This ambitious textbook on the management of the open abdomen provides a practical approach for addressing this complex problem.

One of the more unique aspects of this textbook is its detailed “How to” approach for the wide variety of techniques utilized in the management of the open abdomen, most notably in Chap. 4. While there may be no consensus as to what constitutes the optimal management of the open abdomen, this book articulates a number of options and their advantages. Most importantly, it provides high quality photographs that enhance the step by step “How to” approach of the text. More recent developments including using biologic mesh, implementing complex abdominal wall reconstruction and utilizing minimally invasive endoscopic techniques are described in detail (Chaps. 5–7). An important chapter about complications concludes the text.

This is an extremely well written book that articulates a variety of well thought out options for open abdomen management. This book is not only appropriate for all practicing surgeons that deal with this complex issue, but is also relevant for residents and fellows who are just getting their first exposure to open abdomens.

I congratulate the authors on taking a complex and controversial subject and making it easy to follow, informative, and most importantly; enjoyable to read.

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