Book Review

Thieme Atlas of Anatomy (Head and Neuroanatomy)

Lawrence Ross, Edward Lamperti, and Ethan Taub, Consulting eds. Stuttgart: Thieme; 2007. ISBN 978 1 58890 441 6 (The Americas), 978 3 13 142121 0 (rest of world). Soft cover, 412 pp., RRP EUR 59.95, US$ 81.00 est, AUD$ 98.00 est, JPN ¥ 9,787 est. Web site: Germany, http://thieme.de; rest of world, http://www.thieme.com

Chiropractic educators are insatiable consumers of images. The demand arises from a constant desire to enhance and improve our courseware. The reality is a brave new world where students can, with a couple of mouse clicks, find educational product that they see as superior to the managed, reviewed, and integrated product delivered within formal educational content.

Educators are also under pressure from their managers to maintain currency with their teaching materials and, in an increasing number of institutions, to provide these in real-time electronic format, online. Any new publication that promises an Aladdin's cave of resources to help the academic is warmly received.

And so it is with Thieme's new series of anatomy atlases. There are three in the series: General Anatomy and Musculoskeletal System (reviewed by this author elsewhere),[1] Neck and Internal Organs, and this volume. As with all of Thieme's work, this current offering is intellectually delicious, visually delectable, and intellectually delightful.

The technical details are mundane... almost 1,200 illustrations, some 70 or so tables, a logical layout, and a stunning clarity of artwork. But every academic wants to cross the line into the illicit territory of, "How can I use it in my teaching?" Thieme has considered this and in the near future will provide a DVD of the images used in this atlas, with the positive encouragement that these be used freely by academics in their teaching materials.

That said, let us appreciate that this work has a logical and intelligent structure that reads like a chiropractor's wish list within the table of contents. After dispensing with the 10 sections on the head, we have 12 sections on neuroanatomy. One of the subdivisions deals with the spinal cord. The images here are particularly striking. This reviewer has already introduced a number of these into his teaching of basic concepts to commencing chiropractic students, but their power goes well beyond first year and permeates every level of chiropractic education including postgraduate.

Particularly powerful sections cover the autonomic nervous system (section 11) and functional systems (section 12) and herein lies the value for the practitioner. For example, the opening on pages 322–3 is a brilliant summary of pain conduction within the autonomic nervous system. Two pages, four illustrations, and two blocks

of text exemplify the Thieme approach to their work. It is all no-nonsense and directly to the point.

Every opening of this atlas is similarly educative. Sensuous illustrations are presented in exquisite detail and are supported by well-chosen words that convey core information without baggage. What more could an educator, practitioner, or student wish for? Thieme is to be richly acknowledged for its phenomenal work in creating beautiful learning objects of this quality.

As the 245th publication that I have had the privilege to review over 20 years, I can only say this atlas has my highest recommendation.

Address correspondence to: Phillip Ebrall, The Division of Chiropractic, School of Health Sciences, RMIT University, P.O. Box 71, BUNDOORA VIC 3083, Australia; phillip.ebrall@rmit.edu.au.

REFERENCES

1. Ebrall PS. The best of books for 2005: with critical self reflection. Chiropr J Aust 2005;35: 147–60.

Phillip Ebrall, BAppSc(Chiropractic), PhD
RMIT University