Operative Surgery Vivas for the MRCS

This is a comprehensive study manual for the operative surgery section of the MRCS examination. This unique text is set to the level of a basic surgical examination and the material is discussed in easy to access, simple and informative manner. The A–Z format means topics appear at random, mirroring the nature of the examination. For each operative procedure the basic principles, applied anatomy, indications and complications are discussed alongside an overview of technique. Frequently asked examination questions and practical tips for giving the fullest answer for the most marks are also included. Care has been taken to ensure compatibility with all UK syllabuses, and inclusion of material required for equivalent examinations internationally. This manual is an excellent source of information for use during personal study and self-testing, and as a teaching aid.

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To Cameron and Kirsty who in their own special way have made our lives full and this book possible.
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The MRCS viva examination is divided into six separate sections. These include: critical care, physiology, pathology, principles of surgery, anatomy and operative surgery. In each viva, examiners aim to include questions from at least two or three and sometimes even four or five different topics. This generally means that there are only a few minutes to discuss each topic. It is therefore important for candidates to have a broad knowledge of many aspects of surgery in general. I think in preparing for this part of the examination one should avoid focusing on intricate details of every surgical topic and instead have a simple understanding and an overview of all the basics.

Operative surgery section of the examination tests the knowledge of clinical anatomy. Be prepared to be shown bones, instruments and dissections, and to be asked to draw surface markings. You are not expected to be able to competently perform complex surgery; however, you must understand the relevant anatomy and be aware of the indications, complications and alternatives to the common surgical procedures in each surgical discipline.

In this book we have tried to include some of the more frequently asked questions. For each procedure the clinically relevant basic science is discussed and the surgical technique is outlined. Don't forget to start every answer with comments on appropriate examination, consent and positioning of the patient pre-operatively.

In my opinion anatomy is the most important part of your basic surgical training and its knowledge is pivotal to your passing the examination and later becoming a competent surgeon in
your chosen speciality. Unfortunately there are no short cuts and one must learn the entire human anatomy. This is why spending some time in an anatomy demonstrating post is a good idea. I found larger textbooks easier to learn from as they tend to have more pictures and diagrams. I also strongly recommend attending reputable viva preparation courses prior to your examination.

Finally, “practice makes perfect”, and that is exactly why using this book will help in improving your knowledge and increasing your confidence. Its A–Z format means that the topics appear at random and therefore provide a useful revision aid. This worked for us and I am sure it will for you. Good luck.

Ali Abbassian