

Midline Skull Base Surgery

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Felice Esposito
Editors

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Preface

Understand before you take any decision. Learn. Know.
Then use the proper indications, the proper technique,
the proper instruments.

Pier Paolo Pasolini, an Italian anti-conformist intellectual of great stature, stated that it is mandatory to revivify tradition in order to reinforce it, seldom antagonizing it with new ideas. This dictum perfectly suits the revolution that endoscopy has brought about within the fields of cerebral and ventricular neurosurgery during the past 30 years.

The endoscope is an instrument which, thanks to the intimate, close-up views that it affords, has contributed in expanding knowledge and in unlocking areas (e.g., the cavernous sinuses) and pathologies (e.g., craniopharyngiomas) in which progress was very much needed. This tremendous boost, however, did not mark the end for the preexisting techniques, approaches, and technologies; rather, endoscopy has aided the refinement of indications, improved the application of principles, helped in achieving paradigm shifts, and assisted in limiting nonscientifically based acclamation of results. Certainly, the use of the endoscope has not eliminated the use of the microscope in neurosurgery. The microscope remains a valuable instrument of visualization, but the endoscope has become an alternative or a complementary instrument that has generated real competition. Similar to cataract surgery within the field of ophthalmic surgery, endoscopy has emerged from a subspecialty within a vast subject area to have a dramatic impact. The initial innovation was the consequence of a shared effort among a small number of people, but it was soon greeted enthusiastically by experts in various subspecialties, lending them new life.

Personally, I had the good fortune and the privilege of being a topic editor on endoscopy for two issues of *Neurosurgical Focus* (the online publication of the Journal of Neurosurgery Publishing Group), a supplement of *Neurosurgery* (in *Surgery of the Human Cerebrum, part II*), and two supplements of *World Neurosurgery* (official journal of the WFNS). For these opportunities, I would especially like to thank John Jane Sr, editor of the *Journal of Neurosurgery* for more than 20 years, and Micheal L.J. Apuzzo, ex-editor in chief of *Neurosurgery* and founder of *World Neurosurgery*, whose superb attitude and devotion to the synthesis of science and humanism has helped to bring about the exponential spread of the neurosurgical message among the entire community. The flourishing of endoscopy within neurosurgery and its position within the international scientific literature also

could not have been achieved without the painstaking work and study under the guidance of great teachers, above all Ed Laws, and constant cultural exchanges.

Moving the focus from the endoscope to the inspiration for this book, having thoroughly investigated the indications, techniques, and results of endoscopy with an enthusiasm akin to that of beginners, we felt a need to analyze our “journey” and to compare our experiences and conclusions with the thoughts and views of the neurosurgical community. With this in mind, we have brought together renowned experts in their respective fields and surgeons who have been trained in our school or with whom professional exchanges have been mutually beneficial, enabling both parties to develop further.

It is also worth recalling here to which extent our lives have been impacted by computers in recent decades. Computers have had huge effects on our knowledge, work, operating rooms, instrumentation, studies, and projects. All of us, to different degrees, have taken advantage of this revolutionary and tumultuous process, in which computer technology and other innovative ideas have merged to create the massive flow that has so sped up our lives.

Neurosurgery is alive and active; progress continues to be made in techniques, technology, and research. We are moving forward, striving for tomorrow. Among the present and the upcoming generation, I see those born to be surgeons and those able to take a guiding role or formulate new ideas; indeed, occasionally I detect these attributes within a single person.

Last but not least, all of us, editors and authors, feel indebted to Springer for the support provided by their special editorial staff during the production of this textbook in a period of extraordinary changes.

Naples, Italy

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Electronic supplementary material is available in the online version of the related chapter on SpringerLink: <http://link.springer.com/>

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