

BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN

J.P. Okeson

Bell's Orofacial Pains: the Clinical Management of Orofacial Pain2004, 6th ed.. 592 pp, 223 illustr., Hardcover, \$ 78.00,
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Since the dental community has focussed on the issue of temporomandibular dysfunction (TMD) for several decades, there are numerous textbooks on this form of musculoskeletal pain on the market. Bell's book on orofacial pain, now in its 6th edition, is unique in that it treats all kinds of pain in the oral and facial regions within a single textbook. The book is divided into three sections, the first of which is dedicated to the physiology of the perception of and means of dealing with pain. Okeson informs the reader about how the concept of pain has changed over the years. Originally regarded as a simple warning signal, it is now understood as a complex experience that is subject to a myriad of neurological, psychological and social factors in many ways. The author clarifies the basics concerning the chronification of pain, the concepts of sensitization and neuroplasticity, and the clinical significance of these processes. The second section deals with the classification of the various types of pain. Somatic pain is described with its subgroups, as are superficial, musculoskeletal, and visceral pain in contrast to the varieties of neuropathic pain. As usual in pain therapy, the author's classification system of orofacial pain is bi-axial: there are somatic and a psychological axes to describe all relevant aspects of the patient's state of pain. In the comprehensive chapter on diagnosis, Okeson emphasizes the importance of establishing personal rapport with the patient, as well as the significance of taking a thorough patient history. The clinical examination entails checking all cranial nerves and a cervical evaluation. Special consideration is given to projected and referred (heterotopic) pain, a difficult diagnostic task. Strategies for diagnosing such pain (such as diagnostic blocks) are discussed in depth. Imaging and other sophisticated diagnostic procedures are mentioned, but Okeson clearly puts greater weight on clinical than on technical skills.

In the third section, all forms of orofacial pain from dental pain and headaches to neuralgia are presented on a clinical level. Etiology, diagnosis, differential diagnosis, and therapy are discussed in great detail and in light of current scientific evidence. For this reason the list of references is a goldmine. This section covers recent developments such as those dealing with COX-2-inhibitors and Botox injections.

In some rare instances the author's choice of literature and the sections covered appear somewhat biased. The author does not seem to want to part from the occlusal hypothesis of TMD, one that has lost much if not all of its support worldwide. Consequently, repositioning as a therapeutic measure for internal derangement is still allotted serious discussion,

while it has little support in the scientific community. The most widespread classification scheme for TMD, RDC/TMD, is not even mentioned, probably due to academic competition between it and the author's own classification system, but this omission is acceptable.

Finally, Okeson's book is unique in breadth. It can be considered a standard textbook without competition. It should be read by all those interested in solid, up-to-date information on all aspects of orofacial pain. The book's value is enhanced by the many excellent b/w illustrations, as well as by having a useful glossary and comprehensive index. Strongly recommended!

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