50 Studies Every Plastic Surgeon Should Know, edited by C. Scott Hultman, is a concise book that aims to identify the most influential contributors of our discipline. It is divided into 10 sections, each containing 5 articles. For example, “Foundations,” starts off with a seminal article published in 1929 by Blair and Brown detailing the use and uses of large split skin grafts of intermediate thickness.1 The last section is entitled “Innovations” and, for example, includes a 2009 article by Siemionow et al on near-total Human Face transplantation in the United States.2

The editor, C. Scott Hultman, has compiled the studies to be included. Dr Hultman works as Chief of Plastic Surgery at the University of North Carolina and Associate Director for the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center. Each study is reviewed by authorities in the relevant specialty presented and includes comments from the study authors themselves. Relevant studies for further reading are recommended within each section.

**STRENGTHS**

Each of the 50 seminal articles is examined in turn with the same format. The question that the study is aiming to address is highlighted concisely, and the article is analyzed using the same subsections (sample size, design overview, intervention, follow-up, criticisms, limitations, etc.) for each article examined. This is all dealt with succinctly and is generally done in 3 to 4 pages of text (book reviewed was A5 size) and gives a good understanding of the article without needing to access the full article. Where relevant, key tables of results or figures are included (for example, in the review of Tessier’s 1971 article3 on the definitive plastic surgical treatment of the severe facial deformities of craniofacial dysostosis, useful diagrams demonstrating where to place osteotomies are included to aid understanding).

Each article is summarized in a concise paragraph, followed by a referenced expert commentary that provides the reader with a systematic analysis in a style that provides consistency throughout the book.

In terms of overall content, this book allows the reader to access a collection of articles from authors most associated with certain techniques. For example, Millard’s 1964 article on cleft lip is included, as are Kleinart et al’s 1967 article on zone 2 flexor-tendon repairs5 and Phalen’s 1966 article on his experience with carpal tunnel syndrome.6 This is just a short representation of what articles are included, and most articles (or authors) would be recognizable to those working within plastic surgery, but they may not be articles that the reader has had the chance to familiarize themselves with before. It would, therefore, be an extremely useful tool for those preparing for fellowship examinations.

**WEAKNESSES**

Although it is apparent that the book is not meant to be an exhaustive text that covers all aspects of the discipline,
one area that was not specifically included was trauma. However, key articles such as that by Godina, which details his optimum recommendations for flap coverage to extremities post trauma,7 can be found in the “Microsurgery” section. Similarly, the article by Manson et al about the management of pan-facial fractures8 can be found in the “Head and Neck” section.

Another area that was notably absent was genito-urinary reconstruction, where perhaps a key article on hypospadias repair techniques, and also perhaps an article on pilonidal sinus flap reconstruction, may have been included.

Furthermore, although certain areas are addressed with key articles that would be immediately associated with topics (eg, Furlow’s 1986 article on cleft palate repair with double opposing Z-plasty9), in the same way on the topic of burns, for example, it may be expected that Janzekovic’s 1970 article on burn excision and grafting10 would be included.

**SUMMARY**

This is a well-structured and easy-to-read book with a fairly comprehensive collection of articles, which may be ideal for anyone with an interest in plastic and reconstructive surgery.

Those preparing for specialist examinations in plastic and reconstructive surgery would benefit from perusing its pages to get a more rounded perspective of the historical and scientific basis of current practice and to provide useful anecdotes and references with which to hold a more commanding and authoritative conversation on a variety of topics.

Each article is summarized in a comprehensive but concise way so that exam preparation using this resource may be more time effective and allow a comprehensive overview of the articles covered. Key points are highlighted effectively in each section.

Some key articles are notably absent, but on balance, as it was the intent of the editor to keep this book concise, the texts included still remain relevant and of use within current clinical practice.

**RATING: 3.5 OF 5**

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**REFERENCES**