This book offers unique access to the current views of experts in the field of spine and spinal cord trauma according to the principles of evidence-based medicine involving literature review, consensus agreement, and in-depth personal experience. These experts have used the most recent iterations of evidence-based medicine, including the recently announced five levels of evidence. The practice of spine medicine and spine surgery has changed markedly, and so have the principles of evidence-based medicine; thus this distillation of material on spine trauma offers the reader previously unavailable material and very valuable recommendations for practice. In the relatively circumscribed field of spine and spinal cord trauma, there are major inherent problems with data evaluation due to the acuteness of the condition, the dispersal of cases among centers and practitioners, and the highly variable mix of spinal injuries and spinal cord injuries, all of which have produced a literature of underpowered, and in some cases controversial, studies. To counteract these problems, this book provides practice recommendations according to consensus among experts who have thoroughly examined the literature and have amassed personal experience through focused practice and scholarship. Pooling the experience of spine surgeons has had most salutary benefits, as seen by the emergence of consortia of practitioners such as the Surgical Treatment of Acute Spinal Cord Injury Study (STASCIS) Group that I founded in 1995. It is of interest that two of the editors of this book (AV and MF) are the current leaders of STASCIS.

The book covers a most compressive and panoramic list of spine topics, including all types of spinal and spinal cord traumatic conditions at all levels of the spine. It covers subjects ranging from intensive care to rehabilitation. Thus it will be very useful to a wide variety of clinicians, students, and researchers. Its major relevance will be for practicing neurosurgeons and orthopedic surgeons, residents and fellows in these fields, and the army of allied health professionals and their trainees who care for spinal and spinal cord injured patients, including intensivists, physiatrists, nurses, and rehabilitation therapists.

Congratulations to the editors and authors for easing the burden on practitioners, students, and researchers in spine trauma who wish to make their practice decisions and evaluations based on currently available best evidence.

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