A discipline for childcare must remain young, responsive, and flexible. This flexibility has to be sustained in order for pediatric surgeons to establish their position, which lies in the fields of both pediatrics and surgery. The concept of this book is to break down barriers and to enable young physicians to look up everyday questions concerning diagnostic measures, therapeutic regimes, postsurgical care, and prognostic values during rounds, in collaboration with pediatricians. It also offers a solid and quick overview of the European Pediatric Surgical curriculum.

And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him and pronounce him unclean. If the bright spot be white in the skin of his flesh, and in sight be not deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof be not turned white; then the priest shall shut up him, that hath the plague seven days.

Leviticus 13, 3–4

This bible quotation brings a step-by-step solution to a problem. Leprosy is excluded or confirmed following the guidelines in this formula, as for each condition an individual proposal is suggested. An algorithm is set up using the words “when,” “it is,” “if,” “then,” etc. However, the mass of words is confusing to the reader, who constantly has to refer to prior information in the text. The essentials in this communication icon are lost due to the lack of abridgement. By enlarging the “blank areas” the specific information is enhanced, providing the same information much quicker in the overview.
The user follows just the path that indicates the actual findings, omitting those that are of no interest in that specific case. Time saving is not the only benefit of this approach: much more information can be concentrated as well in this concise form of text.

Despite the fact that this book cannot substitute for a tutorial-type textbook, it can be utilized well by someone who is proficient in the fundamentals of pediatric surgery. It is divided into four parts. Following the introductory Part I, Part II deals with pre- and postoperative guidelines, surgical principles, and emergencies in childhood. Part III deals with diagnosis, therapy, and the prognosis of pediatric surgical diseases, while Part IV reflects normal laboratory values and the dosage regimens of pharmaceuticals in childhood. It may be that a reader thinks that the book would benefit from the addition of further appendices, in which case the editor would welcome their suggestions, and gaps can then be filled in a future edition.

I wish to thank all the distinguished authors, from nearly all the European countries, for their contributions in order to promote pediatric surgical knowledge. A lot of the figures were kindly placed at our disposal by Professors Prem Puri and Michael Höllwarth, from Professor Ahmed Hadidi and Professor Klaas Bax. For their skillful secretarial work I would like to thank Ursula Gueder and Remus Vezan. Special thanks also go to Dr. Vera Pedersen for proofreading this manuscript, considering both grammatical and medical aspects. Finally I would like to thank the editorial staff of Springer-Verlag, especially Mrs. Gabriele Schröder and Mrs. Stephanie Benko, for their valuable support.

Berne, June 2008

Zacharias Zachariou
The contents of this manual offer a praxis-orientated and up-to-date overview of all subjects in paediatric surgery according to the European Paediatric Surgical Curriculum. Additionally interdisciplinary aspects concerning pediatrics, adult surgery, obstetrics and other disciplines working with children were considered.

The tables presented enable quick access to indications for the operative and conservative therapy with schematic step-by-step illustrations of nearly all surgical procedures. Practical information on child-adapted dosages for pharmacotherapy as well as age-specific injury patterns from scalding in young children to spleen rupture in teenaged vehicle users are also taken into consideration. The surgical role in modern pediatric oncology is also presented according to the guidelines of SIOP.

European paediatric surgeons, experts in their fields, write this book not only for students and trainees but also for anybody who treats children surgically.
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Contributors

**Sarah L. Almond, MRCS (Eng)**
Specialist Registrar in Pediatric Surgery
The Royal Liverpool Children’s Hospital
(Alder Hey)
University of Liverpool
Liverpool
United Kingdom

**Steffen Berger, MD, PhD**
Associate Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department Surgical Pediatrics
Inselspital
University of Berne
Berne
Switzerland

**Ognyan Brankov, MD, PhD**
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
University Hospital N.I. Pirogov
Sofia
Bulgaria
Ray Fitzgerald, MA MB FRCS FRACS FRCSI FRCS Ed (ad. hon.)
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
The Old Rectory
Shillelagh
Co. Wicklow
Ireland

Antonio Gentil Martins, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Instituto Portugues de Oncologia de Francisco
Hospital d. Estefania
Lisbon
Portugal

Jan Godzinski, MD, PhD
Associate Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Marciniak Hospital
Wroclaw
Poland

Jean Michel Guys, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Hopital d'enfant La Timone
Marseilles
France

Mirna Haddad, MD
Consultant of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Hopital d'enfant La Timone
Marseilles
France
Ahmed T. Hadidi, MB BCh, MSc, MD, DPS, FRCS, FA, PhD
Head of Pediatric Surgery
Klinikum Offenbach & Emma Klinik, Seligenstadt
Consultant Professor of Pediatric Surgery
University of Heidelberg
Mannheim
Germany

Geraldine Hery, MD
Consultant of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Hopital d'enfant La Timone
Marseilles
France

Wolfram Kluwe, MD, PhD
Consultant of Pediatric Surgery
Department Surgical Pediatrics
Inselspital, University of Berne
Berne
Switzerland

Ingo Königs, MD
Registrar in Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery, Mannheim
University of Heidelberg
Mannheim
Germany

Claude Le Coultre, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Hopital Universitaires de Genève
Genève
Switzerland
Paul D. Losty, MD FRCSI FRCS(Ed) FRCS(Eng) FRCS(Paed)
Professor of Paediatric Surgery
The Royal Liverpool Children’s Hospital
(Alder Hey)
University of Liverpool
Liverpool
United Kingdom

Ole Henrik Nielsen, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Juliane Marie University Hospital
Copenhagen
Denmark

Valerie Oesch, MD
Consultant of Pediatric Surgery
Department Surgical Pediatrics
Inselspital, University of Berne
Berne
Switzerland

Leif Olsen, MD, PhD
Prof. of Pediatric Surgery
Dep. of Pediatric Surgery
University Children´s Hospital
Uppsala
Sweden

Calin Ordeanu, MD
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Jean-Bernard Otte, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Cliniques Univ. Saint-Luc
Brüssels
Belgium

Ioan Paraian, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Iuliu Hațieganu University, Cluj-Napoca
Cluj
Romania

Gian Battista Parigi MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
University of Pavia
Pavia
Italy

Aigars Petersons, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Children’s University Hospital
Riga Stradin’s University
Riga
Latvia

Andras Pinter, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Medical University Pécs
Pécs
Hungary
Peter Raine, A.M. MA, MB, B.Chir, FRCS
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department Surgical Pediatrics
Royal Hospital for Sick Children
Glasgow
Scotland

Risto Rintala, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Children’s Hospital
University of Helsinki
Helsinki
Finland

Alexander Rokitansky, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Donauspital
Vienna
Austria

Theddy Slongo, MD, PhD
Senior Consultant
Department Surgical Pediatrics
Inselspital, University of Berne
Berne
Switzerland

Nicola P. Smith, MA MD MRCS (Eng)
Specialist Registrar in Pediatric Surgery
The Royal Liverpool Children’s Hospital (Alder Hey)
University of Liverpool
Liverpool
United Kingdom
Constantin Tica, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Constanta
Romania

Juan A. Tovar, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Hospital Universitario a Paz
Madrid
Spain

Ernest Van Heurn, MD, PhD
Department of Pediatric Surgery
University Hospital
Maastricht
The Netherlands

Remus Vezan, MD
Department of Pediatric Surgery
Cluj-Napoca
Romania

Zacharias Zachariou, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department Surgical Pediatrics
Inselspital, University of Berne
Berne
Switzerland
Athanasiou Zavitsanakis, MD, PhD
Professor of Pediatric Surgery
Department of Pediatric Surgery
University of Thesaloniki
Tessaloniki
Greece