



BOOK REVIEW

BUNION HALLUX VALGUS BEHIND THE SCENES (2019)



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Before going any further I have a disclosure to make. I have known David Tollafield for many years. As a student in the late nineties I read the influential textbooks he co-edited with Linda Merriman, but it wasn't until I began training in podiatric surgery that I had an opportunity to spend time learning from David in theatre. I then went on to work with David on various College issues during his time as Dean of the Faculty of Podiatric Surgery, and perhaps more significantly we have worked together on the PASCOM project since 2008. Throughout my surgical career, David has been a colleague, mentor and friend.

It was then with some trepidation that I said 'yes' when David asked me to review his latest offering *Bunion Hallux Valgus Behind the Scenes*. Since retiring from clinical practice, David has had the opportunity to put time into his other passions – writing and patient education. In 2018 he launched his first patient friendly book *Morton's Neuroma: Podiatrist Turned Patient*.

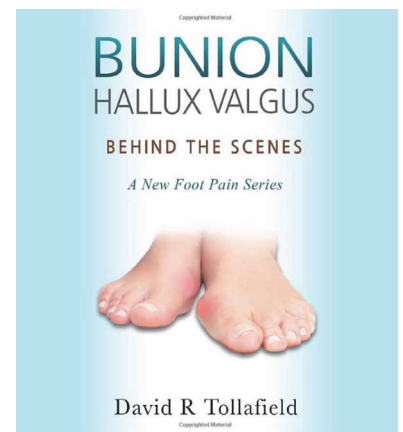
His latest book was published in May 2019 in both e-book and paperback formats. So, what type of book is this? I've honestly not come across a guide to bunions quite like this before. There are many hallux valgus textbooks out there focused squarely at surgeons, and there are self-help guides and online resources for patients, but what's unusual about

this book is that it brings both together in an extremely accessible format.

Will patients benefit from reading this book? Yes, undoubtedly. The opening chapters arm the patient with fundamental knowledge about bunions and answer some common questions such as 'how do you get a bunion?'. The book then moves on to consider self-help, conservative care and decision-making around surgery. This section is of crucial importance; in the age of shared decision-making and patient-centred care we must ensure patients have the knowledge and understanding needed to give their consent to treatment. Chapter 6, Understanding decisions, and Chapter 10, What are the risks from bunion surgery, are particularly enlightening in that regard. The text also includes many real-world examples to support understanding. Finally, Chapter 12 provides patient diaries from the early post-operative days through to the end of the first month.

Podiatrists and trainees reading this book will gain an excellent appraisal of decision-making around bunion treatment and an insight into the patient experience of bunions and surgery. For the practising podiatric surgeon, this book will prove to be an eye opener. Podiatric surgeons of course are able to make treatment decisions based on their experience, their audited outcomes and the wider evidence base. But how often do we really take account of patient

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expectations? How often do we consider the early post-operative experience?

The Montgomery vs Lanarkshire Health Board (2015) case heightened our collective appreciation of consent and the importance of considering the potential impact of specific complications and not simply the likelihood of such complications occurring. The chapters looking at consent and risk are excellent and will support both surgeons and patients in weighing up the benefits and risks of proceeding with surgery and will go some way to supporting shared decision-making.

There is of course an elephant in the room when considering a utopian future of shared decision-making. We are the experts, and it is arguably our job to share the information necessary for a patient to make a judgement about how best to proceed. But often we have no more than 30 minutes to consult with a patient, maybe less. Can we really be sure we've imparted all the information needed for informed patient decision-making? The answer is probably not, and that is where books such as this become important resources, bridging the gap between the knowledge we can practically impart and the additional knowledge patients may be keen to possess before making a decision about their health care. ■