

**DECISION MAKING  
IN  
OTOLARYNGOLOGY**

**HOLT-MATTOX-GATES**

# Decision Making In Otolaryngology

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# PREFACE

Although a great deal of independent judgment exists in caring for the otolaryngologic patient, decision making should be approached in a rational and logical fashion. Whether it be a diagnostic evaluation or a therapeutic action, an orderly sequence of decisions is required to reach the appropriate action. While not all decision steps are always encountered, enough uniformity exists to warrant the publication of the decision making chapters. These chapters visually display the thought processes that we use to make decisions everyday.

The use of algorithms in medical education is not new or unique. Dr. Ben Eiseman, author of *Surgical Decision Making*, has demonstrated the efficacy and usefulness of such a text. Algorithms are compatible with computerized learning in medical education. Yes/no decisions and positive/negative findings can be found in nearly all patient care sequences and lend themselves very readily to computerized instruction as well as textbook education.

*Decision Making in Otolaryngology* does not supplant major textbooks in otolaryngology-head and neck surgery. The decision trees are understood with a strong foundation in the basic knowledge of otolaryngology; therefore, this publication should be utilized as a complement to the larger works. It is also intended as a "memory jogger" to ensure the completion of the evaluation and therapy of complex patient problems.

This book is directed toward the medical student, resident, and practitioner wishing to study, refine, and clarify the diagnosis and treatment of disease within the scope of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery. The content is directed toward the otolaryngologist; however, it is hoped that other practitioners in allied fields such as family medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine, ophthalmology and oral surgery may find selected portions of this publication of benefit.

The contributors have striven to develop accurate and realistic algorithms. In controversial areas they reflect the preferences and thinking of the individual contributor. Their efforts are greatly appreciated by the editors and will undoubtedly reward the reader.

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