

EDITORIAL

REGIONAL MEETINGS OF ANESTHESIOLOGISTS; THEIR PURPOSE AND ADVANTAGES *

THE Northern California Section of The American Society of Anesthesiologists is holding bi-monthly meetings throughout the year. Such a program was initiated to facilitate the dissemination of recent knowledge in the specialty, to foster closer relations among those practicing the specialty and to provide meetings that may be attended by surgeons or other physicians interested in the subjects presented. Moreover, since The American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc., is actively completing plans for organizing rather elaborate annual post-graduate medical assemblies in anesthesiology in different sections of the country, this section is preparing for a part in the program.

These activities, which are now possible with fewer travel restrictions and a lessening of other distractions of recent years, have great significance. It has become increasingly evident of later years that advancements in anesthesiology have made relatively more progress than has been utilized by many of the average practicing anesthesiologists. This means that many patients submitting to anesthesia are being deprived of the benefits of technics and procedures which have been developed by a few possessing more than average energy, facilities and clinical material. Furthermore, in anesthesiology, as in other branches of medicine, there is the inherent tendency to tolerate a ten year lag before a drug or procedure of proved merit becomes widely adopted. Commendable as it is to be cautious, the delay in adopting advancements is too often due to insufficient exchanges of ideas personally between those practicing the specialty.

Training centers where the clinician may find material for his benefit are often at a distance, and frequently one finds it difficult to take the time or spare the expense to share these advantages.

The subject matter appearing in the journals, excellent as it is and representing a great amount of study and effort, often lacks the impetus to stimulate many practicing anesthesiologists into ventures with the new. Perfectly sound ideas presented in print often fade in the heat of a busy morning in the operating room unless there is more of an urge for giving them a trial than the reading done the evening before. Annual national and state meetings, with their necessarily limited number of formal papers, attract too few and present too little to be significant in keeping the rank and file up to date.

* Especially prepared for this, the California Number of ANESTHESIOLOGY.

Regional group meetings offer a highly satisfactory means of urging the field up closer to the leaders. There is the stimulation of personal meetings with those who have pioneered a new method, especially when these leaders admit (as they usually do) that they find many similar difficulties and disappointments which plague most of us in our daily work.

A further need for such meetings lies in the widening field of anesthesiology. Many new tasks have fallen to us. Whether by accident, assignment or by usurpation, it is evident that these tasks are becoming our permanent responsibility. Among these tasks may be mentioned treatment of hospital emergencies, such as asphyxia, narcotic overdose, respiratory obstruction, relieving convulsions, supervising blood banks and transfusion, therapeutic nerve blocks and inhalational therapy. All of this is a big order, and, to keep apace, more effort is needed and more opportunities, such as those offered by regional meetings, must be made available.

WALTER LAWRENCE, M.D.

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