

the method has merit if the cancer is confined to the distribution of a readily accessible peripheral nerve or to a few peripheral nerves. (7) In the study of baffling clinical problems where nerve interruption will be helpful in correcting the abnormal physiology of congenital urinary tract disease. (8) In the study of pain. (9) In patients where the newer drugs have failed to provide relief.

Summary

An analysis from an historical, physiological, pharmacological and clinical point of view of those elements that are concerned with critical assessment of the role of regional anesthesia in diagnostic procedures and therapeutics has been presented. Some of the traditional uses of this method are outmoded and have become less useful. Suggestions as to those areas of clinical practice where diagnostic and therapeutic block is useful have been made.

References

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Nervous System

EEG Electroencephalograms from 650 patients, 466 of whom were neurologically normal, were examined. EEG abnormalities were found in 32.7 per cent of the neurologically normal subjects and 44.5 per cent of those with some degree of neurologic deficit. The presence or absence of EEG abnormalities did not correlate with the incidence of systolic blood pressure elevation over 200 mm. of mercury. Among subjects at least one year after an apoplectic episode, 14.5 per cent of those with hemiplegia and 22.7 per cent of those with hemiparesis exhibited normal EEG tracings. Flat EEG's were found in 8.6 per cent of neurologically normal subjects. (Otomo, E., and Tsubaki, T.: *Electroencephalography in Subjects Over 60 Years of Age*, *Electroenceph. Clin. Neurophysiol.* 20: 77 1966.) **ABSTRACTOR'S NOTE:** Preoperative baseline EEG tracings are essential when one is called upon to evaluate postoperative EEG after surgical procedures involving the cerebral vasculature, especially in geriatric patients.

PAIN AND HYPNOSIS When pain is induced by immersing a subject's hand and forearm in circulating ice water, a rating scale (0-10) can be developed so that a straightline function emerges when the logarithm pain-state report is plotted against the logarithm of time. It was found that hypnotic suggestion of analgesia reduced the amount of pain reported corresponding to the susceptibility to hypnosis. The most highly susceptible subjects blocked out the pain completely. Although no physiologic correlate was blocked, this does not negate the reduction of the pain by hypnosis, but indicates that the locus of the effect must be in higher neural centers concerned with attention and alterations in consciousness. (Hilgard, E. R.: *Quantitative Study of Pain and Its Reduction through Hypnotic Suggestion*, *Science* 156: 539 (April) 1967.)