The Anesthesiologist's Bookshelf

Edited by MEREL H. HARMEL

Principles and Practice of Obstetric Analgesia and Anesthesia. By John J. Bonica. Vol. 1, pp. 837. Philadelphia, F. A. Davis Company, 1967.

Dr. Bonica's projected two-volume work on the "Principles and Practice of Obstetric Analgesia and Anesthesia" is the product of extensive experience and ten years of contemplation and preparation. Volume one, published in 1968, consists of seven sections subdivided into a total of 47 chapters. The first section is devoted to maternal physiology and psychology, the second to uteroplacental, fetal and neonatal physiology. Section three deals with the pharmacology of analgesics and sedatives, muscle relaxants, vasoactive drugs, oxytocics and uterine relaxants. Sections four and five describe the pharmacologic, technical and clinical considerations of general and regional analgesia–anesthesia. The sixth section pertains to maternal complications of general and regional anesthesia, and the seventh to the principles and techniques of psychologic analgesia. Volume two will deal with the clinical aspects of obstetric analgesia–anesthesia.

Each chapter is a well delineated self-suficient unit, enabling the reader to find all significant information within a single text. While this organization of material inevitably has led to repetition, the need to consult different chapters or other texts is obviated. The book was written for anesthesiologists, nurse anesthetists, obstetricians, pediatricians, general practitioners and others involved in the care of the parturient woman and her infant. Thus, some chapters are of greater value for certain physicians than for others. Volume one has been available in the libraries of the Department of Anesthesiology and the Department of Obstetrics of our institution since publication. In both libraries, the book is consulted regularly to answer specific questions. Anesthesiologists find the sections dealing with physiologic aspects most informative, while the obstetricians are attracted to the chapters pertaining to pharmacology and anesthetic practices.

Dr. Bonica's book is the most comprehensive text on obstetric anesthesia to date. I consider it a superb reference book and a major contribution to the medical community. It is well written, generously illustrated with excellent graphs and figures, and provided with an extensive bibliography. It gives the reader a broad base of fundamental knowledge from which he can develop rational independent judgments and clinical decisions. Dr. Bonica's book will undoubtedly elevate the status of obstetric anesthesia and, simultaneously, reflect much credit to the specialty of Anesthesiology.

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The Surfactant System of the Lung. By Emile M. Scarpelli. Pp. 269. Cloth. Philadelphia, Lea & Febiger, 1968.

Preparation of a text on the surfactant system of the lung, a subject in the interstices of sciences, is a challenge since so many disciplines are represented. To satisfy simultaneously pathologists, pediatricians, physiologists, and physicists requires rare talent. Because the background science lies in a branch of physics glossed over in the usual physics text, considerable stress must be applied by the casual reader in acquiring the basic knowledge about surface tension and pulmonary mechanics. In the introduction the entire volume is clearly and simply summarized chapter by chapter. In the subsequent chapter, "Pulmonary Mechanics and Surfactants," a semihistorical approach to the role of pulmonary surfactant in the lung's pressure–volume relationships is utilized to ease the reader without previous acquaintance with the subject into a knowledge of the LaPlace equation, P–V diagrams and area–surface tension diagrams.

The chapters "Pulmonary Mechanics and Surfactant" and "Pulmonary Pathology and Surfactants" will be of most interest to anesthesiologists. "Fetal Physiology and Surfactants" and "Respiratory Distress Syndrome of the Newborn" are most informative to those oriented toward obstetrical and pediatric practice. For those who plan to initiate research projects, the chapter on "Biochemistry" and its associated bibliography provide excellent guides to current methods. Philosophy of the subject is included in "Physical Factors and Physiology." The accepted histologic evidence that the alveolar cell type II produces in lamellar bodies the pulmonary surfactant is now under attack by proponents of the Clara cell of the terminal bronchiole; both arguments are presented in the chapter on "Morphology and Histochemistry."

One paragraph in Doctor Scarpelli's text defines progress to date in the study of the pulmonary surfactant: "There is no disease including respiratory distress syndrome in which a primary defect of the surfactant system has been demonstrated

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