

## The Anesthesiologist's Bookshelf

Edited by MEREL H. HARMEL

### THE TEXTBOOKS OF ANESTHESIOLOGY

*At one time or another, every educator has expressed dissatisfaction with the texts available to his students. Almost as frequently, this concern is shared by students, at all stages of learning. In these books they may not find detailed or recent information that they need. There is the danger, especially in the medical sciences, that the student who transmits information from text to teacher with accuracy will be confounded to find that the author and the mentor disagree. To further compound the difficulties, recent years have seen a revolution in medical education regarded by some as mutual ignorance—teachers don't know what to teach and students don't know what they should learn. Discontent persists.*

*Not to be discouraged, educators continue their efforts. New authors write new texts. Old editions are revised by veterans. Each group of authors claim to pay service to a particularly needy group of students, believing that its approach to medical education is the best and that its peers should follow this pathway. Some take the direct approach of the cookbook, presenting a series of more or less authoritative statements of facts and principles which, it is to be believed, will endure long into the postgraduate years. Others prefer to act in the editorial fashion, collecting the wisdom and opinions of many specialists into, hopefully, a panacea. Still others, with or without editorial assistance and aided by exhaustive bibliographies, offer the student not only authoritative information but diverse views of controversial matters.*

*Whatever route the authors and editors take, their best efforts are certain to meet with adverse criticism. In reality, this is a very healthy situation.*

*Least anesthesiologists, both teachers and students at any level of training, become dismayed by the increasing number of publications and feel, as some do, that there are too many books, let them recall the predicament of a generation ago. Anesthesiology was in its infancy. Unlike other medical specialties, it simply had no satisfactory "standard" texts or reference works. In an effort to satisfy their own particular and sometimes peculiar needs, a few enterprising individuals in a few educational institutions began to compile their own notes and "reading lists," giving these to their medical students and residents. From these seeds have come this season's harvest of books on anesthesiology. How they will be used and the enthusiasm of their reception will depend on many factors, the greatest of which is the lack of standardization of teachers and teaching techniques. Nonetheless, let these books be counted as blessings.*

**Anaesthetics for Medical Students.** Seventh edition. By GORDON OSTLERE AND ROGER BRYCE-SMITH. Edinburgh and London, Churchill, Livingstone, and Baltimore, The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1972. Pp. 139. \$3.00.

Except in America, anesthetics are usually administered by physicians. Many are specialists in anesthesiology. Others, in addition to their regular practice, may be called upon to administer anesthetics in unique situations and so find it necessary to develop and maintain an acquaintance with safe and simple techniques. As medical students, these physicians have participated in a certain number of anesthetic procedures, just as American students once learned the rudiments of the practice of obstetrics.

In 1949, Dr. Gordon Ostlere published *Anaesthetics for Medical Students*. This little paperback book, prepared by Dr. Ostlere with the assistance of Dr. Roger Bryce-Smith, is in its seventh edition. This fact must mean that it has served a useful purpose. As explained by the authors, this is a book for medical students who "... are obliged to administer a few anaesthetics, affording them insight into the specialist anaesthetist's problems and—more valuably—experience in the management of unconscious patients. We hope this book will lighten their difficulties in both the operating theatre and the examination room, and equally that it will indicate the safest, if not the ideal, way of going about an unexpected administration in later life."

As its title indicates, this is a primer for medical students who are observing and administering anesthetics as part of their overall medical education. When, later on, they wish to refresh themselves on what they have been taught, a few minutes review will suffice. This is a "cookbook," giving principles and directions in an elementary and most understandable fashion. It is filled with little homilies and anecdotes. Sadly, it lacks illustrations and bibliography. An amazing amount of information has been condensed into this volume, a tribute to the skill of the authors. The British "vocabulary" should not minimize its value to readers of other nations.

It would be easy for many modern educators to dismiss this work as worthless. It is hardly thought-provoking; it skirts many controversial issues; it is lacking in many details; it is not suitable for residency training. But for those who are sympathetic with didactic instruction combined with practical experience; for those who still believe in the straightforward presentation of basic facts to medical students, this inexpensive little book will serve nicely.

It fulfills its declared objective.

**Anesthesiology, A Manual of Concept and Management.** By CHARLES W. QUIMBY, JR. New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1972. Pp. 352, \$7.95.

Here is a new publication aimed at the beginner—student, intern, or resident. This modestly priced paperbacked text is based on the concept that the neophyte will receive adequate technical instruction and supervision in his everyday operating room work, and concentrates on the more theoretical, yet basic, aspects of anesthesiology. The reader asking "how?" will receive little information. If he asks "why?" he will be rewarded.

Particular emphasis is placed on preanesthetic evaluation and preparation, as well as on post-operative care and complications. The anesthetic record receives deserved attention. Throughout there is evidence of the author's background as a lawyer as well as a physician. Words of caution appear frequently and are well worth rereading throughout the course of instruction.

In the sections on the gas machine, tissue perfusion, and the uptake and distribution of anesthetic agents, the author uses to great advantage a series of simple but authoritative drawings and charts from classic sources, greatly facilitating review of these subjects.

The bibliographies have been selected with care, so that direct access to more detailed information is facilitated. This creates, of course, the opportunity for progression in learning, but necessitates utilization of a library. Is this a disadvantage?

Credit must go to Dr. Quimby's collaborators, Drs. Richard B. Clark and Walter S. Guinee, for their contribution of chapters on obstetric and pediatric anesthesia.

**Introduction to Anesthesia. The Principles of Safe Practice.** Fourth edition. By ROBERT D. DRIPPS, JAMES E. ECKENHOFF AND LEROY D. VANDAM. Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Company, 1972. Pp. 456. \$11.00.

This book was spawned in the days when there were no satisfactory texts and the faculty prepared teaching notes for the students at the University of Pennsylvania. Although the authors have long since separated, this has not prevented them from bringing out this extensively revised and up-dated fourth edition.

The first edition appeared in 1957. It and its subsequent editions have been received with such enthusiasm and approval by faculty and students that they may be considered standards for comparison. Certainly the authors have had ample opportunity for evaluation of criticism from numerous educators.

As in past editions, efforts are directed toward the description of techniques, as well as a consideration of the more theoretical facets of anesthesiology. More highly specialized subjects such as uncommon regional blocks, hypothermia, deliberate hypotension, and other subjects beyond the scope of the beginning resident are omitted.

Some may regard this as an inadequacy, but one can hardly find fault with the basic principles and procedures described.

The bibliographies are simply lists of supplementary readings, with little or no direct reference to sentences or names in the text. Some may complain that the references are too scanty; few can quarrel with the selection. The illustrations, too, are not numerous but have been selected with care.

For those educators who, for many years, have looked to Dripps, Eckenhoff and Vandam for assistance, this new edition will be welcomed.

**A Practice of Anaesthesia.** Third edition. By W. D. WYLIE AND H. C. CHURCHILL-DAVIDSON. Chicago, Year Book Publishers, Inc., 1972. Pp. 1549. \$44.75.

One of the more pressing literary needs of the anesthesiologist has been that of an encyclopedic sourcebook. Although excellent texts on anatomy, pathology, physiology, and pharmacology had been available, few were tailored to the requirements of the anesthesiologist, especially the resident in later stages of training or the post-residency specialist preparing for examinations and lacking access to a large library.

To provide a compendium of this magnitude is a formidable task indeed. In 1959, Wylie and Churchill-Davidson embarked on this effort with the first edition of *A Practice of Anesthesia*. A second edition appeared in 1965; now we have the third. The efforts of the authors and their associates have been successful.

As suggested above, the objective of the authors has been a correlation of the basic sciences with the practice of anesthesiology. The perfectionist may find this effort somewhat disappointing, for detailed information on every subject is not presented. This task is virtually impossible. However, the reader is presented with authoritative statements on a fantastic number of subjects, and due consideration is given to all sides of more controversial subjects. Sometimes the total packet of information is scattered in several chapters, so the reader must be prepared to use the index carefully.

A very real value of this book lies in its bibliographies. While some American readers may be a little confounded by an emphasis on British sources, this should only serve as a reminder of the substantial contributions of our overseas colleagues. The same is true of the emphasis on British equipment—certainly not on adverse criticism.

Without a doubt, this is the best single volume on anesthesiology available today.

#### WHICH BOOK SHALL I RECOMMEND?

*Some teachers advise their students to purchase textbooks. Others discourage this, relying on utilization of libraries, either departmental or institutional. It must be expected that teaching, at*