

The Anesthesiologist's Bookshelf

Fundamentals of Drug Metabolism and Drug Disposition. BY B. N. LADU, H. G. MANDEL, AND E. L. WAY. Baltimore, Williams and Wilkins, 1972. Pages: 615. Price: \$15.00.

Absorption, Distribution, Transformation and Excretion of Drugs. BY KNOEFEL, HUANG, KLINGELE, LE FEVRE, SCHARFF, AND WESTPHAL. Springfield, Ill., Charles C Thomas, 1972. Pages: 220. Price: \$13.50.

Chapters, much less books, on drug uptake, distribution and elimination usually make for heavy reading—the two books reviewed here are no exceptions. But unlike run-of-the-mill works on this subject, the book by La Du, Mandel and Way will make a strong appeal to anesthesiologists. For instance, there are whole chapters on "Drug Entry into Brain and Cerebrospinal Fluid," "Placental Transfer of Drugs," and "Pulmonary Disposition of Drugs" (the latter by Munson and Eger) that highlight anesthetics.

For the neophyte wanting to perform drug disposition and drug metabolism studies (as well as for the curious wanting to know just how the numbers are collected), excellent descriptions of the tools used—chromatography, spectrometry, autoradiography, etc.—are given. The new entrant into the field is also warned of pitfalls that lie ahead and guided through an excellent introductory set of laboratory experiments. The book grew out of three teaching workshops conducted by the contributors—maybe that is why it is not only a good learning source but a good teaching source as well.

Knoefel *et al.* have put together a primer for medical students on how drugs get into, about, and out of the body. It includes an elementary discussion of radioisotopes and instrumentation, and a laboratory exercise for each of the five main chapters. The discussions seldom allude to anesthetic drugs, but have a general relevance for the understanding of drug action.

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Anesthesiology—Progress since 1940. BY E. M. PAPPER, S. H. NGAI, and LESTER C. MARK. Coral Gables, Florida, University of Miami Press, 1973. Pages: 192. Price: \$7.95.

Because of the rapidly changing nature of medicine, physicians continually seek assurances and reassurances that they are "up to date" in their medical knowledge and practices. To this end they readily embrace verbal or written reviews that highlight "current trends" or "recent advances" in a discipline. This is particularly true of Anesthesiology, a field that interfaces with most, if

not all, other basic science and clinical disciplines in medicine. At each interface, a subspecialty of anesthesia with its own groups of subspecialists develop. From these groups comes new knowledge that through such media as review articles finds application in the hands of the large body of "generalists" in Anesthesiology.

One series of review articles that has been highly valued by anesthetist and nonanesthetist alike is that which has appeared periodically since World War II in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Written in 1954 and 1963 by Drs. E. M. Papper and S. H. Ngai, and assisted by Dr. L. C. Mark in the most recent version (1970), these reviews have highlighted and placed in perspective the major advances in the subspecialties of anesthesia in the intervals since the previous review. This book is a compilation of the three reviews plus an introductory chapter that attempts to review the period between 1970 and 1973. The purpose of the book is to provide "a critical analysis of important developments in anesthesiology since the end of World War II."

As individual articles appearing in a current periodical, the reviews by Drs. Papper, Ngai, and Mark were timely, highly informative, and critically interpretive of existing facts and theories. As presented in this book, most of these commendations are lost. The organizational style alone forces the reader interested in a particular topic to follow a circuitous path through the book and to remember the vintage of the material being read. For example, if a reader is interested in a "critical analysis" of the important developments in the field of muscle relaxants, he must read a selection of chapter one to learn about pancuronium (vintage after 1970); a selection of chapter two to learn about the general pharmacology of muscle relaxants (vintage 1946–1954); a selection of chapter three to learn something about the uptake, distribution, sites of action, interactions with other drugs and theories of reversal of muscle relaxants (vintage 1954–1963); and selections from chapter four to learn more recent information (vintage 1963–1970) about uptake, distribution and mechanisms of action of muscle relaxants. Numerous other samples could be cited.

If one is interested in the prevailing point of view at a certain period in time, this book is the answer. If one is interested in a critical, comprehensive analysis of a field or subspecialty of anesthesia, this book is unsatisfactory. For most topics the bridges from one era to the next are narrow and difficult to traverse.

Another weakness of the book, in my opinion, is the authors' abrogation of responsibility for reviewing in greater detail the developments since 1970. Brief mention is made of the involvement of anesthesiologists in intensive care, but the readers are referred to a Medical Progress article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* for more details. No mention is made of such timely subjects as