

management of asthma, I believe its administration deserves a more adequate description than can be given in four lines.

This book thus provides an overview of the commoner respiratory problems, but I am unable to recommend it enthusiastically because of errors of commission and omission in physiology and management of respiratory disease. I do not believe it fulfills the author's aims. This is a disappointment because there is need for a comprehensive book on respiratory disease with sound physiology and biochemistry, together with current concepts of management.

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Local Anesthetics: Mechanisms of Action and Clinical Use. By B. G. COVINO AND H. G. VASSALLO. New York, Grune and Stratton, 1975. Pages: 173. Price: \$14.00.

This is the first monograph to appear in a new series, *The Scientific Basis of Clinical Anesthesia*. Other series of monographs devoted to anesthesiology are already available. Why, then, is yet another being introduced?

The present book is different, refreshingly so. In part because it is written by two individuals, not by a committee or consortium. There are continuity and direction in the way material is presented. There is consistency of style. There is completeness. There is no repetition, or when there is there is a reason for it. In fact, this is such a fine book that one finds one's self checking during the reading to make sure this is indeed an offering in a series, not an independently published monograph.

The senior author, Dr. Covino, though not an anesthesiologist, is widely known and respected within the specialty. His fame and reputation rest in part on his research and writing on the pharmacology of local anesthetics, and in part on his long association with Astra Pharmaceutical Products, Inc., an organization particularly active in and respected for their development of local anesthetics and for their support of anesthesiologists doing clinical or basic science research in local anesthesia.

The results of the long and productive interest in local anesthetics by Dr. Covino and Astra are the sum and substance of the present book. Dr. Covino and Dr. Vassallo (she is also at Astra) concisely and authoritatively summarize all the standard, classic data that should be known to every anesthesiologist; they also present and develop ideas and concepts that may be new to many readers. Why, for example, MAC values for local anesthetics can never be developed as they have been for inhalation anesthetics. Why the ratio

between maternal and fetal plasma levels of local anesthetics may not be as important a determinant of fetal toxicity as has been so often assumed, in view of the role played by the rate of uptake of local anesthetics by fetal tissues. And the important conceptual difference between pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics of local anesthetic, each worth a chapter. It was also a relief to find that authors as knowledgeable as Dr. Covino and Dr. Vassallo have no pharmacologic explanation for the puzzling fact that procaine and mepivacaine are such poor topical anesthetics.

The subtitle of this book promises something few authors choose to try: to discuss mechanisms of action as well as clinical use. Most attempts to navigate this Charybdis and Scylla leave either clinicians or pharmacologists unhappy. Few indeed are the authors who are equally able to discuss molecular mechanisms and clinical practice, but the present authors pull it off, and they do so with style. Those working at the cellular and sub-cellular levels will enjoy this book. So, too, will clinicians. Each will benefit by being exposed to what the other is interested in.

This is not to say the book is completely devoid of fault. All dogs have at least one flea. Repeated stress on the frequency and dangers of allergic reactions said to characterize ester-type local anesthetics is curiously at variance with the way most workers today regard so-called "allergic" responses to these compounds. Many remain to be convinced that true allergy to local anesthetics exists, other than as a contact dermatitis. The basis for the statement that duration of nerve block with ester-type local anesthetics is prolonged in the presence of atypical pseudocholinesterase is not clear, though systemic toxicity certainly would be expected to be increased. And confusion arises when the authors discuss the effects of a high PCO_2 associated with a decrease in pH due to metabolic acidosis. These are peayune details, though. This is a good book. Every anesthesiologist should have it. So should all other physicians using local anesthetics, internists, surgeons, and especially cardiologists, dentists, too. Do not be thrown off by review articles on local anesthetics that have recently appeared. This is more than any review could ever be, an entity unto itself. And as you order your copy, hope that the quality of this monograph will be continued in subsequent volumes of the series. If so, we will have a new era in monographs in anesthesiology.

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Marihuana: Chemistry, Biochemistry and Cellular Effects. EDITED BY G. G. NAHAS, W. D. M. PATON, AND J. E. IDANTÄAN-HEIKKILÄ. New York, Springer-Verlag, 1976. Pages: 556. Price: \$19.80.