

The pharmacology of spasticity is discussed in Chapter 6. This contains much useful information concerning the use of intrathecal phenol for treatment of certain forms of spasticity.

The second portion (Chapters 3 and 5) deals with the use of physostigmine and vitamin B₆ in the treatment of neurological and psychiatric disorders. Again, it is most useful to the neurologist and psychiatrist. Physostigmine is an important anticholinesterase agent and, as such, interacts with some anesthetic agents, muscle relaxants and anticholinergic agents. The interaction with succinylcholine is most important to anesthesiologists, but information on this subject is lacking.

The third portion of the book is dedicated to the pharmacology of increased intracranial pressure and of pain. The factors that determine intracranial pressure (blood volume, cerebrospinal fluid, and the condition of the brain) are discussed. The effects of diuretics on intracranial pressure are presented. The discussions are very brief and basic; for more detailed understanding, readers need to consult the references given. The extensive work of anesthesiologists in this field is not reflected in the bibliography. The effect of anesthetics on intracranial pressure is completely omitted.

The authors discuss certain pain syndromes that may be responsive to anticonvulsants. The Melzack-Wall hypothesis is briefly presented. This chapter is also of limited value to the anesthesiologist.

Other disorders in the field of neurology and neuromuscular transmission, such as myasthenia gravis and myotonia, will be topics in future volumes. If the present volume is an indication of the succeeding ones, they will be of more benefit to neurologists and psychiatrists than to anesthesiologists.

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Self-assessment of Current Knowledge in Anesthesiology. BY D. L. TRICKEY. Flushing, New York, Medical Examination Publishing Company, 1976. Pages: 180. Price: \$10.00.

This is a book of 1,142 multiple-choice questions and answers and references. The material covered is organized by subject,

covers current literature only, and includes pertinent articles from journals other than anesthesia journals.

Many of the questions are concerned with trivial information which does not seem to be of clinical importance. For example, N₂O given in a closed system is an interesting technique and may be a useful way of preventing operating-room pollution. Questions in this area are timely. However, to choose among given values of N₂O uptake in man after two hours of: 60 ml/min and 110 ml/min, is meaningless when one reference gives 73 ml/min at one hour and another reference 110 ml/min at two hours.

Even worse are the questions about minutiae of animal experiments. It is well established that animal data cannot be directly transferred to man—only the broad principles, and that only with great caution. The absolute numbers found in animal experiments are important to the scientists doing the research in that field, but not important to clinical anesthesiologists. Too many questions are about data in rats, cats and dogs.

Nevertheless, the book is of value to anyone wishing to increase his knowledge of current research in anesthesiology. Many good questions are presented. In addition, familiarity with this type of question is important to candidates preparing for examinations.

To get the most out of the book, do not write the answers down in the book itself. Rather, use a separate sheet of paper. Then compare your answers with the answers listed in the back of the book. Your incorrect answers, and there will be many, can then be checked against the references given with each question. This work is best done in the library, because the immediate gratification of knowing the correct answer soon establishes a pleasant, relaxed, well-motivated atmosphere each time you pick up the book. The next session should then begin with a review of the questions of the last session. This not only reinforces the learning process but even restores some of your ego.

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Erratum

An error appeared in the article "Density of Tetracaine-Water Mixtures and the Effectiveness of 0.33 Per Cent Tetracaine in Hypobaric Spinal Anesthesia" (ANESTHESIOLOGY 45:682-684, 1976). The third reference should be: Davis H, King WR: Densities of cerebrospinal fluid of human beings. ANESTHESIOLOGY 15:666-672, 1954.