

technician, as an interesting inspiration to the further study of respiratory care.

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Modern Practical Neurology. By P. SCHEINBERG. New York, Raven Press, 1977. Pages: 247. Price: \$9.95.

This brief, inexpensive, soft-covered book, written by a prominent clinical neurologist, is intended to provide an overall view of neurology for the interested non-neurologist. The author has an engaging, almost chatty, style of writing, which makes readability of the book quite acceptable. He is usually brief in his presentations, always practical, and includes very little theory. The latter is at times frustrating when one encounters a topic of particular interest to him and wishes that more information, both practical and theoretical, had been provided. In areas of controversy the author primarily expresses his personal view and states it to be simply that. One is left with an option to accept or reject his position. The book is adequately illustrated, contains a thorough bibliography through 1975, and the subject index is quite complete, making it easy to locate any particular subject of interest to the reader. Anesthesiologists who involve themselves in emergency room medicine, in intensive care medicine and in neurosurgical anesthesia would be particularly likely to find this book useful. It offers a palatable means of learning something about neurology without being overwhelmed by the topic itself. The chapter, "Management of the Unconscious Patient," may seem to most anesthesiologists to be both simplistic and naive. By contrast, the chapter "Neuromuscular Disorders" may seem to most anesthesiologists to be relatively thorough. Clearly, the author has not tried to please all of the people all of the time, but instead has adopted a middle-of-the-road course, wherein he provides a practical, although incomplete, presentation of the various topics chosen. It is not a reference book as such, nor was it intended to be. On balance, this book can be recommended to non-neurologists who have a passing interest in what neurology is all about.

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Pain Control in Obstetrics. By E. ABOULEISH. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, 1977. Pages: 452. Price: \$27.50.

This book is intended by the author to be "a book on obstetrical anesthesia that would be comprehensive yet easy to read, a book that would recognize the importance of the basic sciences and at the same time be both comprehensive and specific in regard to clinical procedures." It is primarily directed toward anesthesiologists, nurse anesthetists, obstetricians, and perinatologists, although other persons involved in the care of the parturient would also find it of interest. The book is divided into three parts. Part One is concerned with fundamental considerations in anatomy, physiology, psychology and pharmacology, as well as pre- and intrapartum fetal monitoring. Part Two describes the various techniques available for obstetrical analgesia and anesthesia. Part Three addresses itself to the postpartum period, including neonatal resuscitation, intensive care units, and postpartum tubal ligation. The book is well organized, although it might have been better if chapters 5, 6, and

7, dealing with the cardiovascular, respiratory and nervous system effects of vertebral blocks, had followed chapters 13, 14, and 15, describing the techniques of these blocks. Similarly, chapter 8, dealing with vomiting and aspiration, perhaps should have been placed after the chapter on general anesthesia.

The chapters on anesthetic techniques are well written and make generous use of excellent drawings and graphs to reinforce the points discussed in the text. The chapters concerned with changes in maternal physiology and general analgesia, as well as the whole of Part Three, are particularly worth reading. The material is up-to-date and reflects the present interest in catecholamines, uterine blood flow, and the fetus.

Since Dr. Abouleish himself has written 13 of the 21 chapters, the book is in many ways a description of how he personally administers anesthesia. Several sweeping statements, such as "cardiac arrest under subarachnoid block is due to negligence until proven otherwise" detract from the value of the volume. As the author notes in chapter 9, "massive amniotic fluid embolism strikes with sudden onset" and may be associated with "cardiopulmonary collapse with hypoxia of the brain." Toxemia also may be associated with sudden cardiovascular collapse. In neither of these situations would the collapse be due to negligence on the part of the obstetrician or anesthesiologist. Although some studies support the value of bupivacaine in paracervical block analgesia, the manufacturer states in the *Physician's Desk Reference* that "until further clinical experience is gained, paracervical block with Marcaine is not recommended."

Overall, however, the book has a great deal of useful information to impart to the novice involved in the care of the parturient, and makes a worthwhile addition to the average library.

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The Merck Manual. Thirteenth edition. EDITED BY R. BERKOW AND J. H. TALBOTT. Rahway, N. J., Merck, Sharp and Dohme Research Laboratories, 1977. Pages: 2,165. Price: \$10.00.

The first edition of the Merck Manual was published in 1899. It has persevered for more than three quarters of a century as a standard reference guide for students and practitioners as well. Hence, an extensive review of this well-established text is inappropriate.

The latest edition, which was published in 1977, has been almost completely rewritten, and the contents increased by more than 60 per cent. Emphasis is still on diagnosis and treatment, although discussions of basic physiology, pathology, and other factors have been embellished upon. The "Manual" is now more than 2,000 pages long. Although it is still small in physical dimensions, it remains an extremely useful repository of medical information.

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A Synopsis of Anaesthesia. Eighth edition. By R. S. ATKINSON, G. B. RUSHMAN, AND J. A. LEE. Chicago, Year Book Medical Publishers, 1977. Pages: 986. Price: PNS.

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested."—*Francis Bacon* (1561–1626)