

Book Reviews

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Handbook of Clinical Pharmacology. By F. BOCHNER, G. CAR-RUTHERS, J. KAMPMANN, and J. STEINER. Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1978. Pages: 313. Price: \$9.95.

The substance of Pharmacology readily lends itself to the outline format of a syllabus or handbook. Each drug group and then each drug within the group can be described under history, chemistry, actions, mechanisms, uses, side actions, toxicity, preparations and doses. Everything you need to know is right there, compartmentalized and compacted. What then is unique about this outline, *Handbook of Clinical Pharmacology*? A great deal, indeed. In the Preface, the authors state: "Numerous studies of therapeutic indications, pharmacokinetics, and pharmacodynamics appear in the scientific literature. . . . However, this wealth of information often loses value by reason of its inaccessibility in circumstances of greatest relevance, such as in the assessment or treatment of a sick patient at the bedside or in the office. Acutely aware of this difficulty and frustrated by the lack of a convenient source of "hard" data, we began to collect, evaluate, and tabulate the available data on commonly used drugs. The concept of this book was that it would be a readily available, informative source that would help solve many frequently posed problems, such as the adjustments of drug dosage in patients with renal and hepatic disease and the potential adverse effects and possible interactions of these drugs with other medications." The authors delivered a book replete with hard data and largely accomplishing their objective.

The book begins with ten short chapters totaling 85 pages which amount to a short course in Therapeutics and Pharmacokinetics. These include definitions of clearances, volumes of distribution, first-order and zero-order kinetics, and Michaelis-Menten kinetics, and chapters on the therapeutic implications of renal and hepatic disease, pregnancy, lactation, young age and old age. The remaining pages contain profiles of about 250 drugs, describing briefly actions, pharmacokinetics, doses, special situations, adverse reactions, and interactions.

What is unique about this handbook? First, the authors are, respectively, Australian, Canadian, Danish, and English. As Post-Doctoral Fellows under D. L. Azarnoff at the University of Kansas, they conceived and generated this volume. Second, each drug profile is followed by a carefully selected reference list, always fewer than ten, and beginning with a review article whenever possible. Most important, these references concern almost exclusively the pharmacology in man. Third, whenever available, specific values are given for bioavailability, protein binding, volume of distribution, half life, plasma clearance, and therapeutic blood level—all as they apply to man. Fourth, the volume is a paperback, just a little taller but no thicker or wider than an Agatha Christie paperback, and can almost be hidden in the side pocket of a white lab coat.

The anesthesiologist should not be disappointed that drugs such as inhalational and intravenous anesthetics, neuromuscular blocking drugs, sympathomimetics, local anesthetics other than lidocaine, and most emergency drugs have not been included. After all, he uses these drugs daily and has this information at his fingertips. For the occasional drug he may use or for drugs preoperative patients frequently take chronically, here is an ideal ready source of the latest information. At four times the price of an Agatha Christie paperback, this is the bargain of the decade.

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Manual of Anesthesia. By J. C. SNOW. Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1977. Pages: 203. Price: \$12.50.

The *Manual of Anesthesia* by John Snow comes remarkably close to meeting the educational objectives set forth in the foreword: To present an integrated pharmacologic and physiologic approach to anesthesia as practiced in the mid-1970's in the United States. This book is aptly entitled a manual rather than a textbook, reference work, or introduction to the specialty. The 547 pages are divided into 44 chapters, each of which is presented in outline form. If you have the kind of mind that is able to organize material via an outline, then this book will greatly simplify the learning and retention processes. However, one cannot peruse this book with the enjoyment of reading a fine prose style as one can the generalized *Practice of Anesthesia* by Cullen and Larson or even the easily readable Dripps, Eckenhoff and Vandam *Introduction to Anesthesia*.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in book preparation is clearly defining the objectives of the text for the level of anticipated readership. Snow's book contains too much material for the novice student on a short elective. It is a good introductory manual for the beginning resident, but lacks sufficient depth to be considered a true reference text. It is the sort of manual a resident could keep with him and refer to at various times during the day to clarify points of discussion and organize disparate material into a easily remembered protocol.

The book is textually accurate, while it does present several approaches to the same problem. This is explained in the introduction and is an appropriate portrayal of how anesthesia is practiced today.

The book is a complete review, accurate, organized into pre-operative, intraoperative and postoperative sections, and is a reasonable addition to the armamentarium of the new anesthesia resident.

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Anaesthesia for Cardiac Surgery and Allied Procedures. By M. A. BRANTHWAITTE. With a contribution by D. J. HATCH. London, Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1977. Pages: 203. Price: \$21.50.

The author states in the preface that this text is designed for physicians facing, for the first time, patients who have heart disease, and for those preparing for postgraduate examinations. It is basically an introductory text, lacking the depth of coverage that would be valuable to those who specialize in the area of cardiac anesthesia. The book is didactic in style, and presents the techniques used in 1977 at Brompton Hospital in England.

The relatively short book (203 pages including index) is divided into ten chapters dealing with physiology, pathology, preoperative assessment, pediatric techniques, specific lesions, and anesthesia for both open and closed cardiac procedures. At the end of each chapter are lists of references, each categorized under specific headings. For the most part, these provide some valuable resource material for further study. However, some of these references are outdated, and some refer only to British articles and research. Included in each chapter are numerous figures, drawings and photographs. Most of these are clear, concise, and self-explanatory. However, in the figures using original operating room tracings, the quality of reproduction is poor, and therefore the figures are difficult to interpret.