

# Book Reviews

(Edited by B. Raymond Fink, M.D.)

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**The Recovery Room.** BY CECIL B. DRAIN AND SUSAN B. SHIPLEY. Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Co., 1979. Pages: 608. Price: \$16.95.

The recovery room is a special place. It provides a transitional time for the patient to regain his automatic control from the anesthetist and to begin to cope with a new insult, the surgical procedure. Effective action in this environment requires knowledge of both anesthesia and surgery, as well as specialized insight into the recovery process. I have been puzzled at the lack of attention of the literature to recovery room medicine or nursing. This book written for recovery room nurses is, therefore, of high interest. It is pleasing that such a timely book is well written and highly informative. It is a good basic text of anesthesia and surgical procedures from a nursing point of view, and would be either a good training text for new nurses or a review for the experienced recovery room nurse. I was especially pleased with the addition of definitions sections to some of the specialized chapters, making effective communication between doctor and nurse somewhat more likely.

Its only real drawback lies in being too basic. Occasionally, controversial topics are oversimplified. The bibliographies at the ends of the chapters usually contain only references to other basic textbooks and don't help the reader to more specialized physiologic or pharmacologic literature, e.g., journals. This is not a major problem, however, and the book succeeds in accomplishing its main objective of providing a comprehensive overview of the recovery process.

I would recommend this book highly as a basic textbook of the recovery room for nurses engaged in that specialty.

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**Advances in Pain Research and Therapy.** Volume 2. EDITED BY JOHN J. BONICA AND VITTORIO VENTAFRIDDA. New York, Raven Press, 1979. Pages: 702. Price: \$48.00.

This book presents a collection of papers and discussions from the International Symposium on Cancer Pain, sponsored by the Floriani Foundation, Venice, May 1978.

The book follows the usual multidisciplinary format of Dr. Bonica; it provides a panoramic view of many aspects of cancer pain and its control. Its contents are organized in two parts: Part One presents basic considerations on pain, and Part Two deals mostly with pain management. The second part is subdivided into ten sections, each discussing a particular treatment modality, and the management of specific cancer syndromes. Although a few ideas are actually new and original, some chapters on neurophysiology, biochemistry and psychology of pain (Part One) are outstanding summaries of difficult and complex issues. Several chapters of Part Two have the old flavor of presentations from the Bonica's book, *The Management of Pain*, and some illustrations were actually taken from that classic textbook. In particular, the description of cancer pain mechanisms by Bonica, in his introduction to Part Two, is a masterpiece of descriptive medical writing now, as it was when it was first written in 1953. The section on nerve blocks may be of special interest to the anesthesiologist. However, most of the presentations in this section are disappointing. They seem to be hopelessly grounded in the ancient cable-like

model of pain and lead the reader to believe that painful perceptions and conditioned pain behaviors can be modified for a long time simply by blocking peripheral neural pathways, without other forms of supportive intervention. No hypothetical reference is made, nor are any data presented, for alternative, possible modes of actions of nerve blocks, such as deep-stimulation analgesia and massive placebo effects; no effort to frame the role of nerve blocks in long-term comprehensive pain-control strategies is presented. I fully agree with the statement by Dr. Bonica in his closing remarks about the acute need of further clinical studies with the purpose of reassessing the actual role of nerve blocking in the control of painful states, and how this role fits the ever-new findings from neurophysiologic and behavioral research. The section, "Ablative Neurosurgical Procedures," is rich in new techniques for surgical lysis of specific nociceptive pathways, while the recent approaches to deep surgical stimulation analgesia are challenging, even if their actual effects on pain perceptions are largely uncharted. Personally, I tend to agree with Dr. Pagni's conclusions in his "General Comments on Ablative Neurosurgical Procedures": Such procedures are not always the final answer for relief of cancer pain. They may have specific value in terminal malignancy with life expectancy no longer than a few months. One flaw in this book is the little emphasis given to rehabilitation programs for relieving the suffering of cancer patients in conditions of physical and emotional impairment. A recent study (Arch Phys Med Rehab 59, September 1978), has shown that 42 per cent of cancer patients have emotional problems; 36 per cent, general weakness; 30 per cent, failures in activities of daily living; only 27 per cent have pain. The topic of rehabilitation is mentioned here and there throughout the book; but such references are lost in the overwhelming emphasis on the treatment of the disease process, the use of drugs, and the interruption of peripheral nociception. The section, "Psychologic and Sociologic Methods for the Relief of Pain of Advanced Cancer," is one of the shortest in Part Two. This crucial aspect is briefly mentioned in the Chapter on the Hospice Concept, which is remarkably informative.

In summary, despite its minor flaws, this book will provide a rich source of information and references to those health professionals who deal with cancer patients or may seek intellectual knowledge on cancer pain. However, I believe that the major value of this new Bonica literary effort, in association with Dr. Ventafridda, will be to focus the attention of clinicians, scientists, economists and politicians on the very fact that we are facing a worldwide epidemic of human suffering because of longer survivals from neoplastic diseases, an epidemic which no single individual, technique or effort can control or solve.

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**The Heritage of Aviation Medicine.** BY ROBERT J. BENFORD. Washington, D. C., Aerospace Medical Association, 1979. Pages: 122. Price: \$4.50.

The title of the book is somewhat misleading. I expected much more than the book contains. The subtitle, however, does explain the contents: the book is an annotated directory of early artifacts