

anesthetic inspection of the anesthesia machine. The high-pressure safety check will permit detection of a leak at the reservoir bag extension, and allow time for orderly correction of the problem, thus decreasing the likelihood of a life-threatening intraoperative crisis.

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Medical Jargon—A Few Lines about “Lines”

*To the Editor:*—The advent of invasive monitoring techniques has led to major advances in patient care, as well as to an understanding of physiologic and pathophysiologic events and the pharmacologic effects of a host of drugs. It has also had an undesirable effect. It has resulted in a further corruption of the English language.

The literature abounds with references to central venous lines, pulmonary-artery lines, and the insertion of arterial lines. Conventionally, a line refers to: a long, slender cord, a rope carried on a ship, a device for catching fish, a scope of activity, a wire, a horizontal row of written characters, a short note, a limit, a chronological series, a group of football players, and military officers of junior rank or combatant states. One may also refer to a pipeline. Here, characterization is on the basis of the material used in its construction. Alternately there is a gas line, sewer line

or water line (main is preferable). In the latter instances, characterization is on the basis of material carried.

A central venous line does not carry central veins, nor is the pulmonary-artery line constructed of pulmonary arteries. One inserts an arterial cannula or catheter and connects it to a line that transmits pressure to an appropriate transducer or provides a route for the sampling of blood.

One would hope that the interpretation of the data derived through the use of these “lines” is a bit more exact than is the language used to describe them.

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