BOOK REVIEWS

Edward Lowenstein, Editor

Manual of Anesthesia. Second Edition. BY JOHN C. SNOW WITH NINE CONTRIBUTORS. Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1982. Pages: 434. Price: $15.95.

The *mission* of the *Manual of Anesthesia* ". . . is to present . . . the methods of anesthesia . . . and to provide . . . references . . . for clinical anesthesiologists, resident anesthesiologists, nurse-anesthetists, and medical and dental students." This charge by the author is mammoth. It is a rare textbook indeed that can cover the entire scope of a discipline to a readership with knowledge and skill as varied as the target group for the *Manual*. The *means* the author has chosen to present the broad and sweeping overview of anesthetic practice is a 434-page outline divided into two sections ("General Considerations" and "Special Anesthesia Problems in Surgical Specialties"), containing a total of 44 chapters. The first edition manuscript has been changed by elimination of specific chapters dedicated to enzymes and lasers, this material being incorporated into existing test, and by addition of new chapters devoted to a more in-depth look at blood gases and invasive monitoring.

It is the author's intention to present a variety of alternative practices of anesthesia. Many sections of the book are very successful in achieving this end; however, the text too often reads as though a single authoritative approach is being promulgated. Two examples of this narrower perspective are the recommendations from the chapter on CPR that emergency tracheotomy be done instead of cricothyrotomy and intracardiac injection of medications be employed while no mention is made of the endotracheal route. Snow wishes to educate a varied mix of readers. It is apparent, however, that all readers need to be well educated prior to reading the *Manual* in order to discern the controversies, fully understand the subtleties, and detect the inaccuracies (amitriptyline is not a monoamine oxidase inhibitor).

A major advance of the second edition of the *Manual* toward the achievement of its *mission* is the upgrading of the references. The one-page, 23-reference list of the first writing has been expanded greatly to include a total of 450 references in lists at the end of each chapter. The bibliography includes current citations from anesthesia and related literature but does not represent "the" list of references all students of anesthesia must read.

Further *modification* of the *Manual* appears appropriate before it can be recommended strongly for inclusion on any group's library shelf. By virtue of its outline form, the *Manual* is cursory, and either the student knows too little or the practitioner knows too much to find it helpful. A significant improvement for this book might be a clearer focus of information for a more homogeneous target readership with defined entrance level knowledge upon which the *Manual* then could build.

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Principles and Practice of Blood Gas Analysis. BY A. P. ADAMS, C. E. W. HAHN. New York, Churchill Livingstone, 1982. Pages: 101. Price: $19.50.

This slim volume is a concise and yet comprehensive survey of the field of blood–gas analysis. The first half deals with the theory behind the clinical aspects of PO_2, P_{CO_2}, and *p*H in blood, including O_2 and CO_2 transport and acid-base balance. The authors employ a lucid, step-by-step approach to their subject.

The second half of the book deals with the practical aspects of blood–gas measurement. The authors present a detailed description of the chemical and physical principles underlying such instrumentation as O_2 content analyzers, CO-oximeters, and the electrodes used to measure blood gases. The detailed text is complemented quite well by an abundance of clear diagrams and illustrations. One would like to have seen, in this revised edition, an acknowledgment of the recent improvements in reliability of blood–gas instrumentation and some treatment of the practical applications of commercial blood gas controls and tonometry in a working laboratory. Also, the references at the ends of the chapters could have been updated.

Nevertheless, these objections are outweighed by the lucid treatment of the information presented, and this volume should prove to be worthwhile and instructive reading for both students of medicine and technicians of blood gas analysis.

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