

## BOOK REVIEWS

Edward Lowenstein, M.D., Editor

**Practical Regional Anaesthesia.** EDITED BY J. J. HENDERSON and W. S. NIMMO. Oxford, England, Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1983. Pages: 345.

Practical Regional Anaesthesia is a 345-page book published in 1983. Most of the authors are from Scottish medical centers. The editors state in the preface "little guidance on the scope of regional anesthesia, selection of patients, or management of major or minor complications" can be found in available texts and that "this volume is an attempt to fill the gap, and may be used as a companion to descriptive texts." The book succeeds in this regard. It is easy to read and is useful as a guide for the indications for regional anesthesia. However, its lack of illustrations makes it useless for the performance of blocks. It does provide a reasonable introduction for the beginner to the pharmacology, applications, and practical considerations of regional anesthesia.

The book is divided into three main sections and an appendix. Section I focuses on the chemical and pharmacologic properties of the drugs used in regional anesthesia. The writing is obscure at times, and some important points are missing, e.g., there is no mention of the sodium bisulfite-2-chloroprocaine issue, of the role of the breakdown of ester local anesthetics in allergic reactions, and that methylene blue, for the treatment of prilocaine-induced methemoglobinemia, can act as a Hb oxidant when used in large doses and exacerbate the problem (Bromage, *Epidural Anesthesia*, p. 300).

Section II deals with general considerations such as premedication, complications, and interaction with concurrent diseases and medications. The chapter on complications is extensive and lists several hundred references. However, it is not as well organized as other chapters and contains ambiguous statements, e.g., "large doses of benzodiazepines reduce the mortality rate as well as preventing convulsions. . . . In clinical practice, premedication with benzodiazepines does not guarantee prevention of seizures" (p. 91). The sections Systemic Complications of Adrenaline, Miscellaneous Traumatic Complications, Complications of Epidural Anaesthesia, and Complications of Individual Techniques are quite good. However, the statement "Phenol seems to be the safest of the sterilizing agents" (p. 113), backed by two short references from 1950 and 1956, is outrageous for this neurolytic agent.

Section III is the best part of the book. It is divided into eight chapters on major categories of surgery for which regional anesthesia can be used and a chapter on sympathetic blockade. The chapter on head and neck surgery has several good photographs of lesions operated on under regional blocks.

The overall tenor is toward helping the reader formulate a smooth, safe, well-rounded anesthetic plan. Safety factors that are well known to the experienced anesthesiologist, but that need to be stressed to the novice, are emphasized. For example, the authors discuss the importance of a thorough preoperative assessment of the patient, the development of a good physician-patient rapport, the education of the patient, the availability of resuscitative equipment, and the hazards of relying on heavy sedation to compensate for inadequate analgesia. Complications of specific blocks are discussed, such as the dangers of a supraclavicular block in a patient with severe respiratory disease, of a masked epidural hematoma during continuous epidural infusion for postop analgesia (this is becoming more pertinent as this technique gains popularity), and of masked neurovascular compromise (e.g., from an injury, surgical mishap, or overly tight cast) with a prolonged brachial plexus block.

The main weakness of this book is the paucity of illustrations on anatomy and techniques and the poor quality of the few that are presented—the illustration for the supraclavicular block (p. 200) is

almost ludicrous. This shortcoming severely limits the usefulness of the book. Its two strengths are the extensive bibliographies and the attention that is given to overall patient care.

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**The Pediatric Drug Handbook.** BY WILLIAM E. BENITZ, and DAVID S. TATRO. Chicago, Yearbook Medical Publishers, 1981. Pages: 475. Price: \$16.95.

Physicians caring for infants and children are often in a quandary when seeking information regarding their drug therapy. This is particularly true for the anesthesiologist who cares for children on an infrequent basis only. Pharmacology texts and the *Physicians' Desk Reference* often ignore the differences in responses to drugs of infants and children or blandly state that safety and efficacy have not been established in children and that caution must be exercised. This handbook by Benitz and Tatro is recommended as a valuable reference source for many specialists in pediatrics, anesthesiology, and surgery. The style is concise and clear, and the recommendations are uniformly sound. The information is presented in an organized fashion with helpful tables and graphs, and the prescribing information is supported by a very detailed set of references. The inclusion of references and tables and the organization of the information make this volume preferable to Shirkey's *Pediatric Drug Handbook*. As a handbook that fits in a coat pocket, it should not be compared with Yaffe's more lengthy *Pediatric Pharmacology*, which remains unsurpassed as an exposition of general pharmacologic principles in pediatrics. Particularly strong sections include those on cardiovascular pharmacology, bronchodilators, parenteral nutrition, and antimicrobial therapy.

This edition was completed in 1981. The authors currently are preparing a second edition, which will include more detail on three topics of interest to the anesthesiologist: intravenous and intramuscular agents for sedation and anesthesia, inhalation anesthetics, and the use of dantrolene sodium in the treatment of malignant hyperpyrexia.

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**Endocrinology and the Anesthetist, Volume 11, Monographs in Anaesthesiology.** EDITED BY T. OYAMA. New York, Elsevier Science Publishers, 1983. Pages: 272. Price: \$73.00.

This monograph aims to review the effect of anesthesia and surgery on endocrine function, and "the effects of metabolic disorders on anesthetic management, surgical techniques, and the postoperative care of the patient." While it succeeds reasonably well in fulfilling the first goal, it fails almost uniformly in its second goal.

Oyama begins by reviewing his classic studies of the effect of anesthetic agents and surgery on endocrine function. No attempt is made to indicate the significance on clinical care of these effects. Kehlet, in the next chapter, similarly reviews the effect of regional anesthesia on endocrine function and the effect of surgery on endocrine function. He and coauthor Moller indicate their impressions

of what these alterations might mean to clinical care and are careful to point out what is fact and what is hypothesis. Other particularly excellent chapters are those by Philbin, detailing the effect and implications of anesthetics on basal and surgically stimulated vasopressin secretion, and by Shamooin, detailing the effects of anesthesia and surgery on glucose regulation in normal and diabetic patients and the implications of those effects for clinical care. This latter chapter is the best discussion of which I am aware of this important area. The book contains several chapters that are at best twice removed from the field—such as one on myasthenia gravis and another defending neuroadenolysis of the pituitary for treatment of chronic pain. The copy-editing leaves much to be desired: articles are referred to in text without being listed in the references, sentences are missing verbs, poor English is not rare, and many statements lack explanation.

Though the excellent chapters listed above deserve to be read—especially the one on glucose regulation and diabetes—the deficits of the book will dissuade most individuals from purchasing a copy and appropriately limit its place to reference libraries.

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**Introduction to Anesthesia: The Principles of Safe Practice, Sixth Edition.** EDITED BY DRIPPS, ECKENHOFF, and DANN. Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 1982. Pages: 496. Price: \$24.50.

The current edition of this popular textbook of anesthesia is remarkable for at least two characteristics. The authors have avoided a tendency toward increasing complexity of presentation and, most amazingly, actually have decreased the length of the text! The book continues its focus towards the “novitiate” as the authors state, and offers very readable and informative text for those who have neither the need nor the industry to diligently peruse the more encyclopedic texts. In spite of brevity and focus, the entire specialty is well covered. One in command of all the information presented here is a well-informed anesthesiologist.

The sixth edition is the second since the death of the original senior author, R. D. Dripps. To this reviewer, the style and form are retained. Although the number of contributors has increased, there is a consistency of writing and concept from section to section. The unevenness of many multi-authored texts has been avoided. The book is quite current, a tribute to the authors, who continue to actively practice anesthesia more than a quarter of a century after the publication of the first edition.

New chapters have been added on education in anesthesia, cardiopulmonary anesthesia, neurosurgical anesthesia, geriatrics, therapy of pain, and controlled hypotension. Additional diagrams and figures have been added throughout the book. It is pleasing to find that dogma in choice of drugs and anesthetic techniques is largely avoided.

The authors state in the preface that superannuated drugs are omitted, yet cyclopropane, diethyl ether, methoxyflurane and fluroxene are given individual, albeit brief, discussions. Contrariwise, fentanyl and its successors are accorded precious little attention. The recent addition of newer muscle relaxants to our armament has occurred since the publication of this volume.

The addition of the chapters on special areas of anesthesia seems a valuable addition and provides a brief but informative look at subspecialization in anesthesia practice. The information is appropriate

for the practitioner of anesthesia who has accumulated a few years of experience as well as for the beginner.

The authors indicate that they debated the writing of yet another edition of this popular text. We can be glad they did, for it combines information, pleasant reading, and a very useful text to a very wide variety of those who have or need an interest in anesthesia and its safe practice.

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**Monitoring in Anesthesia, Second Edition.** EDITED BY L. J. SAIDMAN, N. T. SMITH. Boston, Butterworth Publishers, 1984, Pages: 556. Price: \$44.95.

Anesthesiologists are clinical applied physiologists and pharmacologists. The ability to safely practice this type of specialty depends upon the facilities available to the anesthesiologist, allowing him/her to sense what is occurring as care is provided for the patient. The topic of monitoring in anesthesia, therefore, is fundamental to and synonymous with the practice of anesthesia. A book devoted solely to monitoring is as essential to anesthesia as the “Book of Genesis” is to the Torah.

*Monitoring in Anesthesia* first was published in 1978. It was pointed out in the review (Martin RM, Bashein G: *Monitoring in Anesthesia—Book Review. ANESTHESIOLOGY* 50:178–179, 1979) of that edition that the text served as an excellent resource book, updating monitoring technology and techniques for the clinical anesthesiologist. Now, six years later in 1984, the second edition of *Monitoring in Anesthesia* is available. The general praises of the first edition review can be echoed for this new edition.

The format of *Monitoring in Anesthesia* has not been changed. The first dozen chapters consider monitoring for the general and subspecial areas of anesthetic care.

There are two new chapters in this portion of the second edition: “Monitoring the electroencephalogram and evoked potentials during anesthesia” and “Special considerations in monitoring children during anesthesia.” The second section of the text (four chapters) deals with monitoring issues that are generic to all of the preceding chapters: *i.e.*, computers, electrical safety, monitor selection and maintenance, and future trends. The second edition continues to direct its attention to the clinician either in practice or in training. The text continues to be practical and not excessively technical.

There are several specific changes in the new edition. Verbatim repetition of the first edition chapters has not occurred. Rewriting, with the inclusion of new and/or more detailed information, has improved the current edition's content: for example, the chapter on Monitoring of Respiratory Function has an expanded consideration of hypoxic pulmonary vasoconstriction, with a new and helpful summary diagram, and the chapter on Noninvasive Monitoring includes consideration of nuclear cardiology and echocardiography, neither topic having been considered in the earlier edition. Two chapters have been revised extensively, both for the better. The chapter devoted to computers has been improved by expansion of its presentation of “What is a Computer?” Although this is by no means an exhaustive presentation, the reader will gain a 1980s sense of computers, as opposed to the previous 1960s approach. The chapter on monitor selection and maintenance has been rewritten so that “Standards” (*e.g.*, NFPA, UL) are presented and “needs” (*e.g.*, selection safety—connector incompatibility, and maintenance schedules and their impact upon clinical care) are considered in more