

BOOK REVIEWS

'numbers' displayed by the instruments that he or she may neglect close observation of the patient at all times."

Since airway-related complications are a primary cause of anesthesia-related morbidity, it is appropriate that the chapter on "Complications of Obtaining and Maintaining an Airway" is the longest in the book. Sugioka has included some beautiful "pearls" for preoperative evaluation of the airway and for intubating the tracheas of patients in whom direct laryngoscopy proves difficult. Although he states that blind nasotracheal intubation "is as much an art as it is a science," Sugioka describes and illustrates in great detail a sequence of maneuvers that increase the probability of success with this technique.

The chapter on "Cardiorespiratory Complications of General Anesthesia" is relatively brief; however, the discussion of the risks associated with hypocarbia should be required reading for all anesthesiologists. Similarly, Sugioka's recommendation that hypotension resulting from relative anesthetic overdose be treated by ventilating with oxygen rather than by administration of vasopressors seems to be the product of years of experience in teaching residents to avoid overreacting to this common scenario.

I was particularly intrigued that Sugioka shares my preference for the supraclavicular approach to the brachial plexus. By using a short, fine needle, as illustrated in the chapter on "Complications of Regional, Epidural, and Caudal Anesthesia," he believes that the risk of significant pneumothorax can be minimized. In contrast, he states

that the interscalene approach "is fraught with dangerous complications" (e.g., subarachnoid injection "leading to total spinal anesthesia, permanent neurologic deficit, or cardiac arrest"). It also was refreshing to see a discussion of the "oft-neglected" use of hypobaric anesthetic solutions to reduce the risk of hemodynamic instability during subarachnoid block.

In summary, reading *Anesthetic Complications* is like having an experienced anesthesiologist at your side, describing some of the more common pitfalls that might be expected to occur during one's career; I must admit that more than a few of these were familiar from firsthand experience. In a sense, *Anesthetic Complications* provides a means of learning "the easy way," from somebody else's experience, rather than "the hard way," from your own misadventures. Perhaps this book should be required reading at several stages of one's career: At the beginning of training, to give an overview of common (and not so common) problems for which one should look during residency; near the end of residency (perhaps before written or oral board exams), to put one's experiences into perspective; and regularly thereafter, to refresh memories of how to avoid and manage rare and not-so-rare complications of anesthesia.

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ERRATA

The title of the letter to the editor by Doenicke published in the March issue (Doenicke A: Atracurium is contraindicated in patients with a known allergy to drugs. *ANESTHESIOLOGY* 78:607, 1993) is in error and should instead read "Is Atracurium Contraindicated in Patients with a Known Allergy to Drugs?"

The article "Elucidation of Dose-Effect Relationships for Different Opiate Effects Using Alfentanil in the Spontaneously Ventilating Rat" by Yang, Weinger, and Negus, published in the July 1992 issue of *ANESTHESIOLOGY* (77:153-161, 1992), contained two errors. The units of EMG activity on the ordinate of figure 1 on page 156 should have been labelled in mV/10 rather than in μ V. In figure 8 on page 158, the labels identifying the curves for "Catalepsy" and "Muscle Rigidity" should have been switched.