

BOOK REVIEWS

ceiving monoamine oxidase inhibitors, or presenting for electroconvulsive therapy.

Over the past several months I have asked a number of our residents rotating through the preoperative evaluation clinic to use this book as a primary reference. Reviews from these physicians have been invariably positive, and the book has been consistently useful in this setting. If more detailed discussion is required for a particular disease, it can be obtained from standard textbooks of anesthesiology, medicine, or pediatrics.

In summary, I strongly recommend this book to anesthesia practitioners of all levels. It should be very helpful to residents preparing for oral board examinations and clearly belongs on the bookshelves of anesthesiologists caring for an aging population with an increasing incidence of coexisting disease.

Stephen D. Parker, M.D.

Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine
The Johns Hopkins University
600 North Wolfe Street, Tower 711
Baltimore, Maryland 21287-8711

Going Under: Preparing Yourself for Anesthesia. Edited by M. W. Furlong and E. T. Essman. New York, Autonomy Publishing Corporation, 1994. Pages: 190. Price: \$12.95.

I have received two anesthetics since completing anesthesia training, one of which included an episode of intraoperative recall. Although memory of the intraoperative period was not disturbing because of an adequate level of narcotics, I am now acutely aware of how detrimental such an event could have been for someone unfamiliar with medicine. The irony is that my anesthetic was administered by an anesthesiologist who recently finished a fellowship in my division and whose anesthetic technique was exactly what I would have suggested. I mentioned to my anesthesiologist only several months following the anesthetic that I had intraoperative recall. There had been no clinical signs of awareness during the operation.

Even after more than a decade of experience in the particular type of surgery, I still had concerns about technical matters, outcome, pain, and potential complications. I believe these concerns are much greater in our patients than in ourselves and are well addressed by *Going Under: Preparing Yourself for Anesthesia*.

The book is well written and covers both technical aspects of anesthesia and surgery and emotional responses to anesthesia and the surgery experience. The perspective is clearly patient advocacy, and patients who read this text will be well informed, despite the lack of medical details of many areas.

Early parts of the book provide a fine overview of pain, mental and physical responses to pain, and the development of modern anesthesia and its role in patient comfort and safety. There is sufficient theory, discussed simply, to remove the mystery in this area. The

authors thoroughly describe the role of the anesthesiologist in patient care. Although Furlong is an anesthesiologist, the text does not overstate the importance of the anesthesiologist. The importance of the anesthesiologist in perioperative pain management is extremely well done and should clarify for the patient the dynamic nature of pain management.

The authors empower the reader by providing a great deal of information about events in the perioperative period, including a realistic discussion of the frequency of inadequate postoperative pain relief. Discussion of patient communication with medical professionals in ensuring appropriate pain medications is particularly well organized. Included in the discussion of pain is a well written section concerning the importance of the patient's attitude and mental preparation on the manifestation of pain and the response to pain treatment.

Various types of anesthetics were described simply and accurately. Common problems are presented in modest detail without either understatement or overstatement of importance or incidence.

An important aspect of this book is the emphasis placed on the patient's role in preparing mentally and physically for anesthesia and surgery. The authors encourage the development of family support for the perioperative period. They also point out potentially adverse patient activities, such as self-medication with legal and illegal drugs, failure to follow instructions to avoid eating and drinking, and excessive smoking. Those sensitive areas were presented in a factual manner and without judgmental overtones.

One chapter addresses the role of parents when children receive anesthesia. This chapter should reassure parents and prepare them for an active role in supporting the child before and during induction of anesthesia.

Appropriate attention was given to alternative methods of therapy such as hypnosis, Lamaze method for delivery, and biofeedback. The alternatives were discussed mainly as adjuncts to conventional therapy rather than simply alternative treatments.

In summary, this book will allow the patient to become a well informed consumer. It should lead to reasonable expectations concerning experiences during the perioperative period. A byproduct may be some discomfort on the part of some physicians who will be faced with patients who arrive for anesthesia and surgery prepared with specific questions and requests about many aspects of their care. I would certainly recommend this book to relatives and friends who anticipate anesthesia and surgery—and of course for patients in general.

Robert McPherson, M.D.

Associate Professor
Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine
Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions
600 North Wolfe Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21287-7834