

## REVIEWS OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

James C. Eisenach, M.D., Editor

**Pediatric Critical Care: The Essentials.** Edited by Joseph D. Tobias, M.D. Futura, 1999. Pages: 480. Price: \$75.

In the preface of *Pediatric Critical Care: The Essentials*, the editor, Dr. Joseph Tobias, states that the purpose of this book is "to provide a preliminary overview or introduction to [pediatric] critical care medicine." It is also intended to serve as a resource for medical students, residents, and nurses working in a pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) and for the general pediatrician who is occasionally presented with caring for a critically ill child. These intentions are well-met with this book.

Each chapter of this book is well-organized and easy to read. In each chapter, the reader is presented with just enough information to grasp the basic concepts, but not too much information to make the reading burdensome. The tables in each section summarize well the text presented and can be readily referred to when a need arises to access information quickly. This book is also refreshing in that the information presented, especially concerning drugs and therapeutic regimens, is as current as it can possibly be.

Each chapter in the book is well-written; however, several of the chapters deserve specific recognition. Dr. Martin's chapter, "Mechanical Ventilation, Respiratory Monitoring, and the Basics of Pulmonary Physiology" is an excellent review of basic pulmonary physiology as it relates to mechanical ventilation. Furthermore, the graphics presented for the various methods of ventilation allow the reader to understand more easily the nuances of modern mechanical ventilation. This is a chapter all medical students should read.

One of the chapters written by Dr. Tobias, "The Use of Sedative/Analgesics and Neuromuscular Blocking Agents in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit," reflects his extensive experience in this area. This comprehensive review of new, and old, agents used to provide sedation, analgesia, and neuromuscular blockade for pediatric patients will serve as a resource not only for his intended audience, but also for the practicing pediatric intensivist.

The chapter "Blood Product and Coagulation Function" provides practical information and a review of antifibrinolytic agents usually not found in the major pediatric critical care textbooks. The chapter "Congenital Heart Diseases/Arrhythmias" has excellent illustrations of the most common congenital cardiac defects and an appendix of medications any healthcare provider in a PICU will find very useful.

The only criticism of this book is its brevity. For instance, a discussion of the use of BiPap and negative pressure ventilation could be included in the chapter "Alternative Modes of Respiratory Support," and the chapter "Diabetic Ketoacidosis" could be included in a generalized chapter about endocrinologic disorders. A chapter devoted solely to diabetic ketoacidosis, however, is appropriate because this is the most common endocrinologic disorder seen in the PICU. The brevity of this book, however, is more of an asset than a criticism.

*Pediatric Critical Care: The Essentials* meets its objective to provide useful and practical information regarding the initial stabilization and treatment of a critically ill child, in addition to giving an overview as to how these children are treated in the PICU. I would recommend this book to any student, housestaff officer, or nurse working in a PICU. Practicing pediatricians and primary care physicians without ready access to tertiary pediatric critical care centers will also find this book to be very helpful. Pediatric intensivists may also like this book for the

specific chapters mentioned herein. Its relatively low cost, as compared with the major pediatric critical care textbooks, makes it a bargain.

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**RealAge. Are You as Young as You Can Be?** By Michael F. Roizen, M.D., with Elizabeth Anne Stephenson. New York, Cliff Street Books, 1999. Pages: 335. Price: \$25.

Mike Roizen has written a new book that has nothing to do with anesthesiology—and you may well find it his most educational endeavor yet. *RealAge. Are You as Young as You Can Be?* has had an impact on the public and on the lay press. It should have a similar impact on physicians.

Inspired by patient and family vignettes, Dr. Roizen explores the scientific evidence that explains the difference between chronologic age and physiologic age (RealAge). Written for a lay audience, physicians will find this book to be a fast read. Nevertheless, it brims with information about which many of us no longer keep current. The author explains the aging process and how our genetic profiles, and our presumably alterable behaviors, influence it. These lifestyle choices, not the number of years we have actually lived, largely determine our physiologic age. He bases this premise on three "age-busters" that primarily affect our individual aging process: aging arteries, an aging immune system, and social and environmental factors. For each of these categories, he details scientifically based strategies for potential addition of years to our lives, ranging from easy "quick fixes" to more difficult changes. Many of these strategies are already known, such as avoiding tobacco, driving the speed limit, wearing a bicycle helmet, and controlling cholesterol or blood pressure. Many are fun, but often overlooked: exercising, getting adequate sleep, having more orgasms, and drinking more wine. However, what I found to be most interesting and valuable were recommendations about lifestyle alterations that are long on myth but short on science. For example, which vitamins and supplements are worthwhile, and in what doses? What is the ideal mix of aerobic and strength exercise? What are the relative benefits and risks of specific food groups?

*RealAge* offers a quick quiz that determines physiologic age (an interactive version is also available on the Web site [www.RealAge.com](http://www.RealAge.com)). From this starting point, one can adopt age-reduction strategies, many of which are remarkably simple: taking an aspirin a day, adding vitamin E to the diet, or keeping immunizations current. Others, such as maintaining a desirable weight, are more difficult. Regardless, the physician-reader comes away with evidenced-based strategies, rather than the latest fad.

Dr. Roizen dedicated this book to his family: "They not only help me stay young, but are the reason I want to be young." Do not buy this book for your medical library; buy it for yourself and for your family.

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**Paediatric Anaesthesia.** By Edward Sumner, M.D., and David J. Hatch, M.D. London, Arnold, 1999. Pages: 648. Price: £65.

It can be said immediately that the new version of this already famous textbook is a success. In a comprehensible and easy-to-handle format (23 chapters plus a very useful appendix), the editors have managed to discuss the theoretical aspects of the subject and to provide the reader with superior advice regarding how to handle various practical aspects of pediatric anesthesia. In addition to the distinguished staff at the Hospital for Sick Children at Great Ormond Street, London, UK, the editors have been able to attract a large number of authorities from both sides of the Atlantic to contribute their knowledge to the new edition, making it a truly internationally valid textbook.

The text is easy to read, meticulous work has been done to avoid overlap between different authors, and no chapter is either too exten-

sive or too superficial. Strong merits include the numerous references supplied and the excellent illustrations and exceptionally useful tables, which summarize key information. Also, the price is very appealing. In consideration of the general price level for medical literature, I would have expected at least twice this price for a textbook such as this.

In summary, this textbook not only belongs on the office bookshelf of all people involved in pediatric anesthesia, whether occasional or full time, but also deserves a place on your bedside table as a worthy alternative to your favorite fiction literature.

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