

James C. Eisenach, M.D., Editor

**Pharmacology of the Critically Ill.** By Gilbert Park, Maire Shelly. London, BMJ Publishing Group, 2001. Pages: 189. Price \$49.95.

*Pharmacology of the Critically Ill* is a relatively brief textbook (179 pages) written primarily by anesthesiologists from the United Kingdom, although there are authors from several other countries as well. As stated in the preface, the book was not written to describe how critically ill patients should be treated but, rather, how critically ill patients respond to the drugs that they are given. The authors believe that there is a need for such a book because the care of critically ill patients is becoming more complex and their treatments are becoming equally more sophisticated. I could not agree more.

The book has several chapters describing the basic principles of pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics of drugs given to critically ill patients. There are six chapters dealing with how specific organ injury affects pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics (although the chapter on brain failure is more of a chapter on how one should treat patients with closed head injury). The final two chapters discuss pharmacology for children who are critically ill and safe drug prescribing for the critically ill patient.

The book is very well written and easy to read, and overall it provides an excellent review of the pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and effects of multiple organ dysfunction syndrome on the pharmacology of drugs given to critically ill patients. Certain chapters stand out, such as the chapters on drug action and renal failure. Throughout the book there are excellent discussions of the effects of critical illness on the cytochrome P450 enzymes and the effects of critical illness on receptors within specific organs (e.g., the heart). The references for each of the chapters are excellent. As the authors often point out, extensive studies involving critically ill patients are lacking, and often information must be extrapolated from human studies conducted in the operating room, from animal studies, and from cell studies.

Overall, *Pharmacology of the Critically Ill* provides an excellent review of an important topic, and I would recommend it for anesthesiologists who work in an intensive care unit and for pharmacists who work with them. Those looking for extensive insights into specific drugs, such as sedatives and neuromuscular blocking agents or antibiotics, given to patients in an intensive care unit will be disappointed. There are very few studies of drug metabolism in critically ill patients, which, in and of itself, is equally disappointing. This textbook appropriately addresses how multiple organ dysfunction syndrome can potentially affect any drug on the basis of the degree of renal, hepatic, gastrointestinal, cardiac, or pulmonary dysfunction. At \$49.95, the book should be within the purview of anyone working in an intensive care unit.

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**Concise Anatomy for Anaesthesia, 1st edition.** By Andreas G. Erdmann. London, Greenwich Medical Media, 2001. Pages: 141. Price: \$39.95.

Written by an anesthetist from Peterborough, England, who was motivated by personal experience and comments from previous examination candidates, the main purpose of *Concise Anatomy for Anaesthesia* is to present an illustrated outline of anatomy based on the Fellowship of the Royal College of Anaesthetists (FRCA) examination syllabus, intended for examinees preparing for the viva, or oral examination. It is further touted as a quick review for educators, practicing anesthetists at all levels of experience, and operating room personnel.

The book's content is divided into five major sections: respiratory system, cardiovascular system, nervous system, vertebral column, and areas of special interest. Within each section are several chapters that further delineate topics relevant to the anesthesiologist. For example, the respiratory system section includes one chapter each for the mouth, nose, pharynx, larynx, trachea, bronchi and bronchial tree, pleura and mediastinum, lungs, and diaphragm. Where relevant, chapter headings include anatomic description and borders, relation to bordering anatomic structures, points of interest, vascular supply, nerve supply, and lymphatic drainage. The succinct, explanatory text is primarily in outline form. Each chapter is accompanied by at least one figure on the opposite-facing page. Because FRCA examination candidates often are required to compose anatomy sketches, all illustrations are simple, black-and-white drawings. Adopted from the actual FRCA format, open-ended, essay-type sample questions conclude each section.

The originality and simplicity of this book is impressive. The outline text with an adjacent figure allows the reader to rapidly review each topic systematically, making the book very user friendly. Answering the sample questions may require research of more thorough resources because of the concise nature of this book's text. This may detract from the speed of use that *Concise Anatomy for Anaesthesia* offers, yet mastery of these study questions will ensure an adequate knowledge foundation of anatomy specific to anesthesiology. The index is straightforward and, naturally, is similar to that of an anatomy atlas.

Admittedly, this book is not a complete anatomy reference. From the anatomic illustration standpoint, the figures lack color and dimension. From the narrative perspective, the text lacks details of function, physiology, and pathology. Taken together, this book is best suited for the FRCA candidate because of its brevity and relevance to the anatomy portion of the examination. It appears that the FRCA examination emphasizes more recitation of anatomy than the American Board of Anesthesiology (ABA) examination. Nevertheless, anatomic knowledge is paramount to the astute anesthesia provider, regardless of location, and this book certainly will not hinder preparation for any anesthesia examination. Because the drawings can be recreated, and the text can be recited, educators and trainees alike will benefit. In summary, *Concise Anatomy for Anaesthesia* is a solid bet for reviewing anatomy specific to our profession in a short time. The black-and-white format obviously keeps the cost down to a reasonable \$39.95—a welcome relief at the bookstore.

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