

David O. Warner, M.D., Editor

**Cardiac Drug Therapy, 6th Edition.** By M. Gabriel Khan. Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 2003. Pages: 542. ISBN: 0721602428. Price: \$44.95.

If your practice involves any patient receiving therapy for ischemic or valvular heart disease, hypertension, arrhythmias, congestive heart failure, or hyperlipidemia or receiving antiplatelet/anticoagulation therapy, then M.G. Khan's 6th edition of *Cardiac Drug Therapy* is a must buy for your reference library. In other words, this complete and up-to-date reference text should be of interest to every practicing clinician. This new edition includes significant new information compared with the last edition, including evidence from numerous randomized clinical trials that have been published in this area during the last 4 yr.

I highly recommend first reading the preface to the sixth edition, which is a good introduction to Khan's entertaining style of writing and also sets the tone for the following content. Khan combines his obvious wealth of clinical experience with the succinct conclusions of pertinent randomized clinical trials to formulate his recommendations/guidelines of cardiac therapy. In particular, the book is careful to distinguish between conclusions and recommendations based on firm scientific evidence and those based on experience and theoretical considerations. Although preferring the former approach, he also does not unduly disparage the latter. However, when appropriate, he does not hesitate to reveal and discredit treatment dogmas that have been applied to clinical practice, often for years, without any scientific basis.

I suspect this text will be an exception to the usual reference text that spends most of its life sitting on the shelf, utilized occasionally for a quick reference. For example, I approached the review of this text intending only to sample its content. However, I found that I actually read the majority of the book, which for me is quite unusual for a reference text. This is probably because of Khan's unique literary style that links inherently boring pharmacological information with current evidence and applies this directly to the experience and practice of cardiac care. The presentation is complete yet succinct, allowing a considerable amount of useful information to be consolidated into a very concise format.

I was particularly impressed with the last chapter of the text, which is a compilation of the results (in the form of charts that are very easy to read) of the most recent clinical trials pertaining to therapy for acute coronary syndrome, heart failure, hypertension, and arrhythmias. The results of these trials are also dispersed throughout the text as they pertain to current therapy guidelines and are referenced to this chapter. The text also includes the most recent Advanced Cardiac Life Support algorithms as well as chapters discussing cardiac drugs in pregnancy and a discussion of interactions of cardiovascular drugs.

In sum, this text is an excellent review of state-of-the-art cardiac therapy. It is therefore a useful reference for any individual who cares for patients with cardiac disease and should not be reserved solely for the cardiologist or internist. Medical students and residents will find it of particular value during their patient care rotations.

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**Atlas of Pain Injection Techniques.** By Therese O'Connor, Steven Abram. London, England, Churchill Livingstone, 2003. Pages: 141. ISBN: 044306380X. Price: \$75.00.

An atlas is a book of tables, charts, and/or illustrations that deal with a specific subject. O'Connor and Abram provide such a work focusing on common injection techniques in pain medicine. They make no attempt to compete with more comprehensive atlases covering regional anesthesia, all of the interventional techniques of contemporary pain management, nor the advanced pain therapies. Rather, the major topics covered are autonomic and somatic blocks with moderate attention to epidural techniques, trigger point injections, and joint injections. The authors use a standardized format for each block with the general outline including the relevant anatomy, the necessary equipment and common drugs, the patient position, the needle puncture and technique, the clinical tips, and the potential problems. The information is generally up-to-date, succinct, and accurate. For example, there is a laudable three pages devoted to transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation, and the mechanisms of pain are concisely presented in two pages. However, some clinicians may be disappointed that the book does not detail the indications for each block. The index is appropriate and useful. The bibliography is a short "suggested reading" list with the inclusion of some major textbooks published in the 1990s (some readers will eventually use only these textbooks after consulting them, given the abundance of ancillary information and figures). The appendices at first reading seem to add little to the body of the text, but perhaps the ones on corticosteroids, resuscitation drug doses, and dermatomes of a body figure in many positions will be valued by some readers.

The authors are to be commended for advocating the placement of IVs, the use of standard monitors for most procedures, and the ready availability of resuscitation equipment. They appropriately acknowledge in the preface that nerve blocks are but one modality of an otherwise comprehensive treatment program in the management of persistent or severe pain, debunking the old-fashioned mode of practice that stressed "the block." The lack of color in the abundant illustrations will disappoint some when this text is compared to others, but I found them to be contributory and accurate. This exclusive use of black and white is especially noticeable in the nervous system diagrams in the autonomic blockade section. When fluoroscopy is mentioned in the text, a corresponding picture of a successful clinical circumstance is nearly always included. Suprascapular and intrabursal techniques for shoulder pain and bursitis are not included and more emphasis is given to facet joint injections than the more common median branch block (the title for which is not even included in the index). Perhaps this latter comment is explained by the predominant United Kingdom influence in the book, also evidenced in some of the language and spelling, the preference for recumbent positions during epidural placement, and the inclusion of steroids in the drug list for many blocks.

The "Potential Problems" sections demonstrate a thorough appreciation for the possible complications of the techniques, a feature especially evident in the discussion of neurolytic blocks for cancer pain management. This is a useful feature, as the precise, step-by-step descriptions of the blocks risk oversimplifying the hazards of each technique (the authors have added a "Special Circumstances" statement right at the beginning of certain block sections such as for trigeminal and stellate ganglion blocks).

In summary, this is a reasonably inclusive, elementary, and economical primer of injection techniques in pain medicine that is written in the "how-to" motif. Although not innovative, it is more convenient in size than many like books. The physician who does the occasional block will find the book a ready source of concise refresher information (down to specific instructions for performing some of the techniques as a right or left hand-dominant person). Practitioners and students of all specialties, and especially nonanesthesiologists and those early in their careers, will find this text a useful and reliable guide.

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***The Pharmacology of Inhaled Anesthetics.*** By Edmond I Eger II, M.D., James B. Eisenkraft, M.D., Richard B. Weiskopf, M.D., Baxter Healthcare Corporation, New Providence, New Jersey, 2003. ISBN: TXVI-035635. Pages: 327 and 2 DVDs. Price: Complimentary.

Everything changes. The publisher used to be the first thing listed after the authors and title of a book (but this book doesn't list a publisher). It used to be that the copyright of a text would not be in the name of the first author (like this one). In the past, if a book was said to be made possible by an unrestricted grant from a drug company, its content would be suspect. But again, everything changes, and this is an outstanding integration of text and audiovisual material that addresses an important topic.

This hardcover text comes with two very professionally prepared DVDs showing Dr. Eger lecturing to residents and nurse anesthetists at North Carolina Baptist Hospital, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, as part of what is said to be the Dannemiller Distinguished Professor Program. The DVDs contain 8 hours of lecture interspersed with figures, tables, questions to and from the learners, and brief clips of operating room demonstrations of various clinical points. In addition to knowing the answers to virtually all of Dr. Eger's questions, the students vary from reality in their fairly formal attire and that they seem to never tire during the 8 hours of didactic instruction (plus, they take no notes, refer to no papers or personal digital assistants, and no beepers sound off)! The text is clearly augmented by the DVDs, which closely follow the content of the book's 16 chapters. The figures in the DVDs are not only more numerous than those in the text; they are more instructive because they are multicolor and Dr. Eger emphasizes the salient points while you study them.

The well-referenced text covers everything from history to mutagenicity to vaporization of the inhalation anesthetics. Pharmacokinetics and effects on various organ systems comprise the majority of the content. Questions and objectives with each chapter reinforce learning and enable the program to qualify for continuing medical education credit. Unlike much educational material, which is often prepared by those who did not contribute to the science, these authors performed much of the foundational work in the field, and their expertise shines through.

This package uses multiple formats to strengthen learning. Educational research suggests that most live lectures lead to retention of only a small percentage of retained new knowledge on the part of the learner. A lecture on DVD might actually be a better learning tool than a live lecture, because in addition to picking the ideal time and place for study, the student can easily review parts not understood the first time they are heard. "When the wheels aren't tuning, there is no learning" is a motto of Philip Liu, M.D. (Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA), founder of the Society for Education in Anesthesia (Park Ridge, IL), as he describes how little is actually learned in the back of dark lecture halls. But when a good lecture is combined with a good text, the two should be synergistic or at least additive in imparting new knowledge. When used together, this text and its DVDs turn multiple learning wheels simultaneously.

This combination could be useful in a myriad of ways to those at many levels of the specialty of anesthesia. A student could spend a

weekend with this work and come away quite knowledgeable about the inhalation agents and their uptake and distribution, complex subjects deeply intrinsic to anesthesiology. An experienced clinician could easily add to the scientific background behind his or her skills, update on the newer agents, and probably learn some new "tricks of the trade" useful in daily practice. What better teacher could one ask for than Dr. Ted Eger, who has always been one of the best speakers in our profession and who was involved with much of the research on these agents. Lastly, this text can even be useful as a reference text; the chapter on pharmacokinetics alone lists 229 references for further study. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of inhaled anesthetics to the practice of anesthesia, and the authors have provided a real service to the specialty by producing this excellent work.

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***The Pharmacology of Inhaled Anesthetics.*** By Edmond I Eger II, M.D., James B. Eisenkraft, M.D., Richard B. Weiskopf, M.D., Baxter Healthcare Corporation, New Providence, New Jersey, 2003. ISBN: TXVI-035635. Pages: 327 and 2 DVDs. Price: Complimentary.

Authored by a group of distinguished clinician scientists who are internationally recognized for their contributions to the topic, *The Pharmacology of Inhaled Anesthetics* is an effectively organized, copiously illustrated, well-written review of both the basic and clinical pharmacology of inhalation anesthetics. From a clinical perspective, perhaps the primary aim of the authors was to compare and contrast the newer inhaled anesthetics, sevoflurane and desflurane, with the older, more soluble ones. In the broader context of how this work fits within the collection of existing textbooks on inhaled anesthesia, it can be viewed as an up-to-date review, integrating recent discoveries with well-established knowledge.

The structure of the book conforms to the traditional areas of investigation for inhaled anesthetics. The initial chapters are focused on basic issues including a history of inhaled anesthetics, physiochemistry, the concept of minimum alveolar concentration, mechanisms of drug action, and pharmacokinetics. Several chapters addressing pharmacodynamics are organized by organ system (e.g., circulatory effects and pulmonary effects). Next are chapters devoted to metabolism and liver-kidney toxicity. The book finishes with very practically oriented chapters discussing inhaled anesthetic delivery systems and clinical applications, offering "how to do it" recipes.

The textbook is accompanied by a number of educational enhancements that clearly increase the overall appeal of the entire package, particularly for residents in training. Each chapter has a list of specific learning objectives. At the end of the book there is a list of study questions intended for students preparing for certification examinations. The answers to these questions can be submitted for scoring and continuing medical education credit. The book is also complete with a DVD-based supplement that complements the text. The DVD is essentially a video seminar focused on the topic; it is organized with the same chapter headings as the book. Filmed in the setting of a small classroom with a group of trainees and author, Edmond I. Eger II, M.D., the DVD seminar is a comprehensive lecture series with standard computer-generated slides. A unique feature of the DVD seminar is the inclusion of "in operating room" video clips created to illustrate the

Publication of *The Pharmacology of Inhaled Anesthetics* underwritten by Baxter Healthcare Corporation through the Dannemiller Memorial Education Foundation. To order, contact Baxter Healthcare Corporation, 95 Spring Street, New Providence, NJ 07974.

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scientific foundation of inhaled anesthesia at the point of clinical care.

The greatest strength of the book is its authoritative authorship. As major contributors to this area of anesthesia clinical pharmacology, these authors have organized their thinking on the topic over decades and are experienced in conveying this knowledge. The book therefore represents an up-to-date review of the entire area. In part because it brings together detailed information that was previously only available in separate monographs focused on the individual agents, and also because it includes the latest discoveries in the field (*e.g.*, new information about locus and mechanism of action, among many others), the book can be considered a “one-stop shopping” source of information on inhalation anesthesia.

A unique aspect of the book that probably deserves mention is the nontraditional publishing pathway. Inspection of the title page does not mention a publishing house or a Library of Congress catalogue number. The title cannot be found through a search of popular online booksellers that feature current books in print. Because the book and

the accompanying DVD recently appeared in the mail boxes of all our residents in training, I have surmised that the book was probably produced as a collaborative educational effort between an industry sponsor and Dr. Eger and colleagues, although it is impossible to be sure by examining the book. A clear statement of support would easily address this confusion and would be appropriate in the spirit of conflict of interest disclosure. In any case, this reviewer believes that the authors have provided a balanced appraisal of the topic.

All in all, I couldn't be much more enthusiastic about this book, particularly for the resident in training audience. It's well done. It's authoritative. And, as best I can tell, it's free.

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