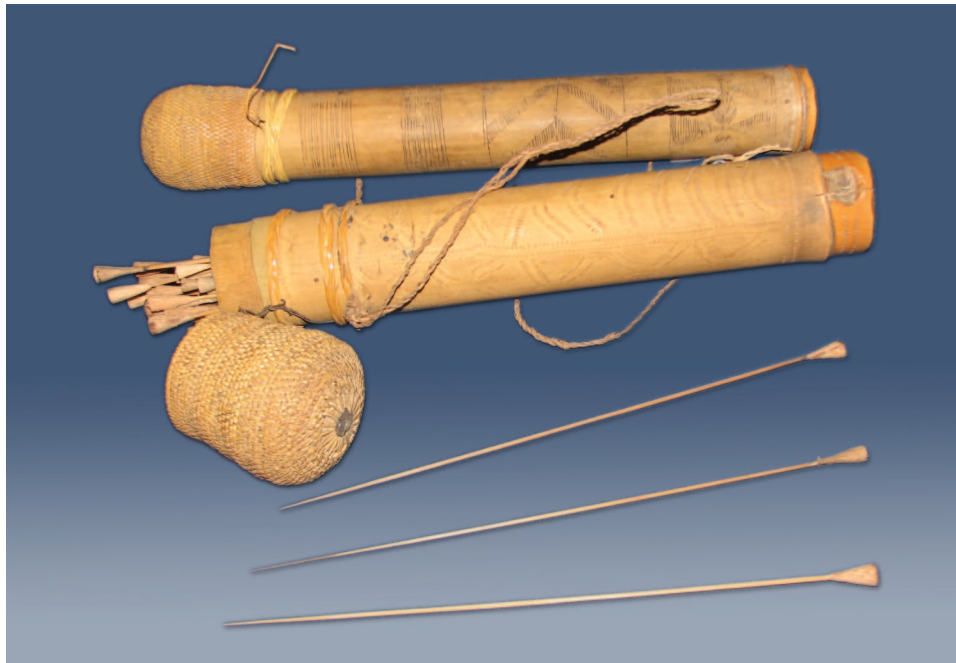


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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Quivers of Curare-tipped Blow Gun Darts



Today's anesthesiologists use curare-like agents as adjuvants for decreasing patients' total anesthetic drug load, particularly of the ether-like organic solvents employed for general inhalational anesthesia. Few physicians realize the debt that we owe to Ecuador and surrounding countries, whose indigenous hunters wore blow gun quivers (above) full of curare-tipped missiles to dart overhead prey, such as monkeys and birds. Sadly, hunters who failed to dart away quickly enough were occasionally themselves darted by their own missile's return to earth. When a hunter would spot the telltale signs of his companion's eyelids growing heavy from the curare poison, the pair would rest against a tree and reminisce about their adventures together as the companion's respirations faltered and finally failed. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

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