Certainly a valid aim but why was the book not then designed as a soft-back pocket book?

The overall impression I get from this book is a mixed one: on the one hand, the case history format is new and certain anaesthetists may like it. On the other hand, this book is neither a textbook with an overall philosophy (which, according to the foreword, is what the authors wanted) nor a quick pocket guide for last minute advice. I am therefore not certain of the place this book will find among the many anaesthesia texts already available today. Again, according to the foreword, ‘it is the reader who must decide…’.

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In this book, a wide variety of topics related to modern cardiothoracic anaesthesia are presented. The format is unique. Each of the 39 chapters uses a case history to discuss one topic. After a very brief introduction, the case is described, summarized in a well-structured table, and then the anaesthetic management is presented. After the case presentation, there is a discussion of relevant physiology, pathophysiology and anaesthetic management. Each chapter finishes with ‘conclusions and learning points’, and 20–50 references.

The chapters are relatively short with few illustrations and tables. The lack of figures in many chapters is unfortunate as one picture is so much more illustrative than a long explanation, and discussing a chest x-ray at length without showing it, is regrettable indeed!

The physiology and pathophysiology are presented in a condensed but concise manner. The anaesthetic management is presented in great detail but with relatively little explanation as to why such management is considered optimal. Certain chapters are very much like a recipe. I have the impression that the book is targeting anaesthetists who are faced with a clinical case where they may want quickly to get some help on ‘how to do it’. This is