This new book forms part of a series exploring aspects of core practice in perioperative care. The book is intended to focus on developments in anaesthetic practice. It is aimed squarely at the UK market of operating department practitioners and anaesthetic nurses needing to maintain their continuing professional development. The book consists of 19 chapters covering a rather eclectic mix of topics: history, risk assessment, deflating the endotracheal tube cuff, anaesthesia, and ECT to name a few. Half-tone figures and tables are used in most, but not all, chapters to help illustrate and emphasise the text.

There is a need for up-to-date, evidence-based, well-referenced, and clearly written book for the people who provide invaluable assistance every day to every anaesthetist. In my opinion, this book does not meet these requirements.

The selection and relative weight of the chapters is inconsistent. The beginning and end of the book are straightforward enough: history of anaesthesia to start, accountability, and developing a portfolio to finish. In between, there does not seem to be a pattern or logical order to the chapters. The nine-page chapter on difficult intubations does not include any algorithm for managing the unexpected difficult airway, whereas the chapter on deflating the cuff takes seven pages to state that the endotracheal tube cuff should be deflated with a syringe, rather than snapping the pilot tube.

The book contains rather a lot of errors. To highlight a few: patients with pulmonary embolus do not invariably have a history of lower extremity venous thrombosis on observation; sub-arachnoid haemorrhage causes bleeding not interruption of cerebral blood supply; and there are specific treatments to prevent sub-arachnoid re-bleeding apart from bed rest, hydration, and analgesia.

Referencing in the book is variable, with few original articles cited, but generally the references are to review articles, textbooks, and online medical resources. The figures appear to be mostly reproductions from internet sources, and this leads, generally, to poor quality, pixelated images. There are some exceptions, particularly the ECGs, which are clear. There are few redeeming features.

The chapter on blood gas analysis is well written and will probably help a student understand a subject many find difficult.

The individual chapters themselves are written in an informal style, which some readers will enjoy, but others will find annoying. Worryingly, the style appears to be most attractive to students and newly qualified ODPs/anaesthetic nurses. This is the group who are most likely to read the book and may be least likely to appreciate its errors and misplaced emphasis.

Despite there being a need for a book covering this area, I cannot recommend this one to trainers or trainees in the operating department.

G. Lyons
Leeds, UK
E-mail: glyons@blocked.org.uk
doi:10.1093/bja/aem255


This new book forms part of a series exploring aspects of core practice in perioperative care. The book is intended to focus on developments in anaesthetic practice. It is aimed squarely at the UK market of operating department practitioners and anaesthetic nurses needing to maintain their