This weighty reference book has been published some 6 yr after the first edition of Radiographic Imaging for Regional Anaesthesia and Pain Management and in a fairly major change of emphasis is aimed at the pain management specialist rather than the anaesthetist. Although the general format remains similar, much of the contents are either new or extensively revised. It contains 37 chapters divided into eight sections: general considerations, common procedures in (five) different body regions, advanced interventional procedures, and emerging techniques. Each chapter is well-referenced and many are very extensively so. As with many texts that seek to be encyclopaedic in coverage of a topic, the early chapters contain a fair amount of information, which should already be core knowledge for most readers – for example, the basic pharmacology of local anaesthetic agents, the need to obtain valid consent, and to document both that and what has been done. That said there is much useful information here which practitioners in this field should be aware of.

The following five sections deals systematically with interventional procedures, not simply nerve blocks, describing the indications, clinical anatomy, equipment, technique, efficacy, side-effects, and complications. In places, the description of the historical developments of a technique goes well beyond what is necessary background knowledge – possibly another problem with the encyclopaedic style. There are numerous illustrations (more than 1500) consisting of line drawings, specially drawn illustrations, photographs, and copies of imaging material. Although these are generally of high quality, they are all black and white and some may have benefited from the use of colour. This book also contains details of intrathecal neurololysis, epiduroscopy, discography, vertebroplasty, spinal cord stimulation, deep brain stimulation, implanted reservoirs, and infusion pumps. There is an accompanying DVD showing hypogastric plexus, lumbar sympathetic and splanchnic nerve blocks including a patient interview and a quiz.

The book is aimed as a reference guide and would not be easy to read from cover to cover. It may be useful for trainees to study before being taught a particular procedure under supervision and for refreshing one’s memory before performing an uncommon procedure. However, it would be wrong to regard this as a text, which will allow the reader to select the correct procedure for every patient. The remit does not extend to a comparison of different therapeutic modalities and options and therefore does not attempt to present a balanced approach to holistic patient care. However it can be recommended for the bookshelf of pain specialists and departments of pain medicine as a practical manual.

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This pocket-sized book is an addition to the Oxford American Pain Library, from Oxford University Press. It is presented in a very similar format to the UK series, the Oxford Pain Management Library, from the same publishers and could usefully be combined with titles from that series. It is targeted at non-pain specialists, to inform on the safe and appropriate use of opioids in the management of chronic malignant and non-malignant pain. The book is laid out well with 14 chapters and four appendices. The majority of the chapters are either written or co-written by the editor, Howard Smith, contributing to a consistent style throughout the book.

The introductory chapter briefly outlines the basic principles of opioid analgesia, with the second chapter consisting predominantly of definitions, relating to opioid use and chronic pain, which helps to clarify areas discussed in the rest of the book. The next chapter is a succinct summary of general opioid pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics, followed by a much more detailed chapter on individual opioids. This chapter is subdivided into five different sub-headings, including an outline of individual drug metabolism and mechanisms of action, plus different routes of administration, including the use of spinal opioids. There is also a very useful section on assessment and management of opioid side-effects, an area that is often inadequately dealt with. The next section discusses the principles of opioid rotation and contains some practical tables for this, including dose conversion between...
different opioids. The final section discusses a practical approach to individualizing opioid treatment. It would perhaps have been of interest to discuss opioid pharmacogenomics here, although this may be of more relevance to a specialist audience. The chapter on the use of opioids for cancer pain is surprisingly comprehensive and will be of real use to non-specialists.

The next four chapters concentrate on the use of opioids in non-malignant pain starting with a review of the available literature in this area, followed by a discussion of the considerations involved before commencing long-term opioid treatment. There is then a discussion of assessment and management of potential substance misuse problems and the use of validated screening tools in this area, and what documentation is important, both for optimal clinical management of the patients, and to avoid potential iatrogenic problems with the use of opioid.

The next chapter is again subdivided to consider the use of opioid in specific potentially problematic areas, such as in paediatric and elderly patients. There are again some very practical guidelines on the dosage and use of opioids, which will be an excellent resource to non-specialists. There is also a chapter on patients with chronic pain and substance abuse, with a discussion on management in both inpatient and outpatient settings. The final chapter on useful websites, organizations, and books is aimed at the USA audience, as are most of the appendices, although some of these could be adapted for use in other countries.

This book is written in a style that is easy to read and follow. It provides both an overview of the subject with some very useful and practical points for anyone using, or considering using, opioids as part of a pain-management strategy. The tables are laid out well and the reference lists are helpful and up to date. Each chapter is divided by coloured sub-headings, which makes it straightforward to rapidly find the required information.

This book is not only a useful educational tool for the non-specialist, but also contributes to improved patient care in both the hospital and community setting, by optimizing opioid therapy.

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