There is no doubt that there is more than enough knowledge in this book to allow practitioners taking up the speciality to pass either the American, British, or European examinations, indeed to a very high standard. Echocardiography is now undoubtedly part and parcel of every cardiac anaesthetist's armamentarium, and indeed many non-cardiac anaesthetists and intensivists. This book will be a valuable and well-used reference book in any department, and will certainly appeal to both beginners and experts alike. The editors and authors should be congratulated on improving what was already a very popular first edition, making purchase of this new version very tempting.

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This is a moderate-sized textbook of a little more than 600 pages and provides an introduction to acute, chronic, and cancer pain management. The editors are from Hong Kong and the text is aimed principally at pain medicine trainees preparing for the FFPM of the Hong Kong College of Anaesthetists. Evaluation of past papers from the exam from the College website is easy enough to do and reveals that most, although not all topics in the past papers, are covered.

The book is arranged in a traditional format by division into five sections: basic science, common pain conditions, pharmacology, interventional procedures, and multidisciplinary pain management. Many common pain conditions are supported with both acute and chronic pain management, although most of the book describes conditions associated with chronic pain and the interventions to manage them.

The chapters have a consistent format and begin with a useful summary of the contents. In general, the chapters are of a descriptive nature rather than a practical, hands-on approach. There is a notable difference in the content of the chapters with respect to detail, and some in the chronic pain field fall rather short of what I would expect for students facing a faculty exam. This arises from the limited extent of the evidence base for many of the interventions, but I would have expected a wider discussion of the evidence available. This is most apparent in the chapters on neck and back pain, particularly when one considers that about half of all new patients in a UK pain clinic present with spinal pain. Some of the information is elsewhere in the book, but the cross-referencing and indexing is limited.

The editors emphasize the multidisciplinary nature of pain management and this is reflected in the broad range of expertise of the authors. However, the traditional arrangement of the chapters means that there is little integration, for example, psychology of pain is generally absent from the chapters on common pain conditions. While two good chapters on Pain Psychology are present, they stand apart, and readers new to pain medicine (at whom this book is aimed) may fail to grasp the complexities of chronic pain management and the important role of clinical psychology within it.

There are a few omissions that may be specific for UK trainees, mainly pharmacological, such as the absence of information on diamorphine and i-bupivacaine and minimum on oxycodone.

There is much to recommend this book. It covers a huge topic in a concise manner and by and large does it well. The general anaesthetist from the UK will not choose this book over many others for acute pain management, but it may be of interest to those wanting an introduction to chronic pain. I would hope a second edition to include improvements that would make it a better investment.

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