Book Reviews

Understanding Anaesthesia (Second Edition)

Len E.S. Carrie, Peter J. Simpson. Heinemann Professional Publishing Ltd., London, 1988. pp. 501
£25.00 and \$65.00 U.S. ISBN 0-433-00039-2

This introductory text, in its second edition, is intended to be a benefit to junior anaesthetists, medical students and intensive care nurses. It consists of 48 chapters covering a vast array of topics including basic anatomy, physiology and pharmacology of relevance to anaesthetic practice, design and function of anaesthetic machines and anaesthesia for various types of surgery. Also included are chapters dealing with such topics as sterilization of anaesthetic equipment, operating room pollution and electrical safety.

This is truly an "Introductory" text book. The scope of the material included is so vast that it could not possibly be covered in any degree of detail in a pocket-sized format. Unfortunately the reader is left with only a very general overview of anaesthesia and anaesthetic practice which may not be suitable for all readers. It is unfortunate that there are also a few outright informational errors. In the chapter titled "Anaesthesia and Intercurrent Disease" the section dealing with malignant hyperpyrexia states the following: "malignant hyperpyrexia ... may be triggered by various pharmacological agents including lignocaine, atropine, diazepam, pancuronium ..."

Another statement which reflects a disturbing lack of completeness found in this text is as follows "the intraoperative use of EKG monitoring, however, is limited to a single lead that is designed to reflect major disturbances in rate and rhythm rather than to diagnose focal areas of ischemia."

The text is easy to read with few typographic errors.

The author states this book is longer than was originally planned and that this was necessary if the material was to be fully covered. Unfortunately, in this attempt, the material receives a rather superficial overview even for an introductory text book. This problem, along with errors and omissions such as those noted previously, make this book unsuitable for anaesthetic trainees and even less suitable for students in other health care roles. It cannot be recommended as a valid addition to a personal or departmental library.

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On Chloroform and Other Anaesthetics

John Snow. John Churchill, London, 1858. Reprinted by The Wood-Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Park Ridge, Illinois, 1989. pp. 443.
\$37.50 U.S. plus \$3.50 postage from Wood Library-Museum

The Wood Library Museum has reprinted John Snow's "On Chloroform and Other Anaesthetics" for the third time. It gives me great pleasure and privilege to review this book – it is a real classic. The foreword by Dr. Nicholas Greene reviews the book and its author. An extensive biography, written by B.W. Richardson for the 1858 edition, precedes the text and covers Snow's medical career in great detail. Considering that the book was written more than one and a half centuries ago, it covers an incredible amount of material. Each inhalational drug of that time is introduced with its history, mode of manufacture and physical properties in great detail. Basic science relating to the effects of inhalational anaesthetics on human physiology are covered in depth. The description of experiments and analysis of fatal outcomes are detailed and interesting. Overall the reading was thoroughly enjoyable. The book is highly recommended to all those who take pride in anaesthesia as their profession and should be in every anaesthesia department library.

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Pulmonary Vascular Physiology and Pathophysiology (Lung Biology in Health and Disease – Volume 38)

E. Kenneth Weir, John T. Reeves (Editors). Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1989. pp. 744. \$125.00 (U.S. and Canada) \$150.00 U.S. (All other countries). ISBN 0-8247-7972-X

This book is a collection of 18 reviews dealing with the pulmonary circulation. The first half of the book discusses normal physiology. Chapters review the pressure-flow characteristics of the pulmonary bed, right ventricular function, phylogenetic and autonomic aspects of circulatory control, and the response of this circulation to exercise, pregnancy, fetal and neonatal life, hypoxia, hyperoxia and diving.

The second half deals with the pathophysiology of pulmonary hypertension. Conditions discussed include pulmonary hypertension of the newborn, primary pulmonary hypertension, ARDS, pulmonary embolism and

various animal models of lung injury. Chapters on the roles of the endothelium, vascular cell proliferation and white cell kinetics in pathogenesis are included.

The reviews are written by experts in their fields, current, and well referenced. The book is too specialized for a personal library but worth browsing through for an overview of current concepts of this circulation.

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**Baillière's Clinical Anaesthesiology (Volume 2/
Number 2)**

Some Aspects of Anaesthetic Safety
O.P. Dinnick, P.W. Thompson (Guest Editors).
Baillière Tindall, London, 1988. pp. 441. £15.00 &
\$30.50 Canadian. ISBN 0-7020-1292-0

Unless one is familiar with anaesthetic mortality studies of the 1960's, safety features of the anaesthetic machine, or the Queen's Honours List, then the names of O.P. Dinnick and P.W. Thompson may not be familiar to the reader. Furthermore, in the foreword the editors describe their hesitation to add to the burgeoning literature of anaesthetic safety. However, they overcome their reluctance, encourage their friends to contribute a chapter, and tie it all together with a Foreword and Postscript.

The result is an interesting book, 13 chapters in 434 pages plus a four-page afterword. But because the book is only 23 cm high, each chapter can be read quite quickly, say, while eating lunch. Topics range from the traditional ones in books on anaesthetic safety, e.g., "Professional audit," to newer ones such as "The cost of safety." There are also two chapters which I do not think belong, "Anaesthesia and resuscitation in the undergraduate curriculum" and "Decontamination of anaesthetic and ventilatory equipment." The former is an expansion of an editorial which appeared last year in another journal and not directly applicable to safe anaesthetic practice by anaesthetists. The latter is a useful summary of the topic, but with old references (except for hepatitis B) and somewhat out of place. However, the editors' choice of title for the book does allow them literary freedom. Furthermore, the choice of authors is unique. The editors themselves admit that some of the contributing authors "will be known only to a few anaesthetists," although "they are all eminent in their particular fields of expertise."

All the chapters have something to add and there is little overlap except with the possible repetition of some of the results of the CEPD Study and two different chapters about regulation of medical equipment (United States of America vs United Kingdom). The chapters on person-

nel selection and the psychology of safety are particularly good and cover many important points. This is also the only anaesthetic book which I know to contain a reference from the magazine, *Playboy*. In summary, this is a useful addition to the library of everyone with an interest in anaesthetic safety.

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Textbook of Paediatric Anaesthetic Practice

Edward Sumner, David J. Hatch (Editors). Baillière Tindall, London, 1989. pp. 603. \$106.50. ISBN 0-7020-1336-6

This book is a broad-based text on paediatric anaesthesia. The editors are internationally recognized for their contributions to the development of the specialty, and the authorship is drawn from practitioners with diverse experience in Europe, Scandinavia, North America and Africa. Answers to questions on all aspects of current practice can be found in its 23 chapters. The topics covered range from routine preoperative assessment and commonly used anaesthetic agents and techniques, to anaesthesia for neurosurgery or heart-lung transplantation. Particular emphasis is placed on the practical management of common problems in paediatric anaesthesia.

Generally, the material is well researched and presented, but interesting differences in attitudes from different regions are apparent. Age-related differences in responses are well described in the chapters on pharmacodynamic and pharmacokinetic concepts and muscle relaxants. The practical management of airway obstruction is clearly discussed and there is a good summary of common congenital abnormalities and eponymous syndromes. The chapter on anaesthesia in developing countries draws attention to the need for provision of anaesthetic services which are appropriate to the area they serve.

This book provides more than a basic understanding of paediatric anaesthetic practice. Areas in which ideas are changing and new concepts are being developed are identified. Day care surgery is becoming increasingly popular. The relationship of metabolic responses and pain perception in the very young is an important new research area. Regional anaesthetic techniques are being used for analgesia, and recommendations for mandatory monitoring and competent assistance during anaesthesia in children are emerging.

This book should be a particularly good resource for trainees in anaesthesia as well as being of interest to the specialist paediatric anaesthetist.

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