Book Review

The Practice of Cardiac Anesthesia

Frederick A. Hensley, Jr. and Donald E. Martin (Eds.).
Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1990. pp. 759.
\$47.50. ISBN 0-316-35777-4

Cardiac anaesthesia has been the subject of several new textbooks in recent years. This pocket reference was intended to provide the resident physician with an overview of the field in a format amenable to daily use. The manual is presented in 727 pages with 37 contributing authors. It is intended to fill a gap between the available texts on the subject of cardiac anaesthesia and the resident's manual produced at most training centres. In the sense that it is an appropriate size and an extremely complete manual it fills this role well.

It is presented in three sections. The first is a background section describing the general approach to the patient about to undergo cardiac surgery, including preoperative assessment of both the patient and pertinent laboratory and physiologic data. This section describes the standard operating room and monitoring facilities required and discusses the anaesthetic management of the "routine" patient from preoperative visit to care in the ICU. This section is well written; however, when an overview is presented institutional preferences tend to surface. Some reservation for the recommended preparation of trimethaphan and sodium nitroprusside for every cardiac case could be expected, while this is wise for aortic arch surgery, their routine preparation is probably unnecessary. Also the mnemonic presented for preparation to wean from cardiopulmonary bypass is a rather complex way to approach the topic and is unnecessary in this otherwise well presented chapter which incidentally contains the only miscue in cross-referencing we could find (p. 264, line 16) in the text.

The second section deals with specific surgical entities and is very well written on every topic. Combined heart-lung transplantation and cardiac tumours are the only omissions. Several equipment topics, such as ST segment monitoring and pacemaker technology and problems, are discussed in this section in association with ischaemic heart disease and electrophysiologic disorders respectively. This departs from the format somewhat but is relevant to these sections and reduces page turning.

The third section is devoted to support of the circulation and discussions of myocardial and cerebral protection during supported circulation. These sections are all well written with the section on ECMO, while presenting an

institutional viewpoint, standing out as especially well organized. Acid-base management during bypass, the subject of major changes in the last decade, is well discussed although repeated in two chapters.

All the chapters in this book are provided with classical references on the topics with recent additions through 1988. The addition of "suggested reading" lists will help the student delve into the background of each subject.

In summary this handbook is a useful format containing a wealth of information. At \$47.50 Canadian it is \$10 more expensive than Dr. Thomas's 1984 manual; however, it is current and in a very portable format. This handbook, by virtue of its size and excellent discussions of specific cardiovascular disorders, will probably replace most in-house resident's manuals and will prove very useful to the trainee involved in an initial exposure to cardiovascular anaesthesia.

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