Book Reviews

Induced Skeletal Muscle Ischemia in Man

Edited by: D.H. Lewis, Published by: Karger, 1982, \$69.00 us

This is a soft-covered 180-page book detailing the papers and discussion at a symposium on the effects of induced ischaemia, complete and incomplete, on the metabolism and ultra-structure of skeletal muscle and on the central haemodynamics in man. All the presentations are by Swedish groups but the text is in English and takes the form of a series of papers with a discussion at the end of each as well as the relevant references. The contents are divided into five main groups, metabolic and circulatory effects of ischaemia, effects of complete ischaemia, effects of incomplete ischaemia, preventative measures, and effects of ischaemia on central haemodynamics. There are good summaries of the effects on skeletal muscle of aortic clamping, cardiopulmonary bypass and the use of peripheral tourniquets. The presentations are of a uniformly high calibre and a particularly nice touch is the way that the discussion following the various presentations has been neatly summarized.

It should be noted this book deals only with the effects of ischaemia on normal skeletal muscle and muscle diseases *per se* are not considered. In the section concerned with central haemodynamics the pros and cons of general anaesthesia versus epidural blockade for aortic reconstructive surgery are discussed. There is general agreement that vasodilation is beneficial and should probably be instituted prior to aortic clamping.

There is also agreement that if left ventricular failure is anticipated then there is a need for a pulmonary artery catheter to measure the filling pressures of the heart.

This little book can be recommended for those interested in the problems of skeletal muscle ischaemia and is an excellent survey of the problems presently confronting investigators. However, many of the problems posed are still in the very early stages of solution and as quoted in the concluding remarks, advances in the management

of ischaemia, including stroke, infarct and stasis in a variety of organs will be of great benefit to all.

Leo Strunin, MD
Department of Anaesthesia
University of Calgary

Problems in Anesthesia: A Case Study Approach

M.R. Ravin, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1981

The author of this introductory text, aided by 17 contributing authors uses a case-study approach to introduce and focus discussion on 18 separate topics. In this approach effective? The answer to this question will depend on the reader's expectations for an introductory textbook in the field of anaesthesia. If the reader is seeking a text which is comprehensive he will be disappointed. For example, although separate chapters are devoted to the differential diagnosis of hypocarbia and hypercarbia, the important problem of hypoxemia during anaesthesia is not the subject of a case study. Readers looking for an interesting approach in an introductory text book will be pleased by the use of case studies. However, I question whether the complexity of some of the cases described, and the accompanying discussions, are appropriate for an introductory text. Although there are excellent chapters which appear appropriately directed towards the beginner in the field of anaesthesia, many of the chapters are simply too complicated for the novice, yet too superficial and incomplete for the more experienced student seeking a complete and authoritative discussion of a given subject. Perhaps the best guide to those interested in this publication would be the statement of objectives and approach which are included in the preface. 'There are two main objectives of this book. The first is to teach the student about the "thought processes" of the anesthesiologist. The second objective is to demonstrate how the practice of anesthesia is the practice of medicine. This book is not intended to replace the

traditional anesthetic texts with their emphasis on a sequential approach to the patient who is to undergo anesthesia. Rather, it presents the specialty of anesthesia as combining the dynamic cognitive skills of the diagnostician, the manual requirements of the technician, and the attitudinal approach of the humanitarian.'

Douglas B. Craig, MD
Department of Anesthesia
University of Manitoba

Infection and the Perioperative Period

Eds Alex Mathieu, John F. Burke, Grune and Stratton, New York 456 pp \$44.50 us

This book has been written with multiple authorship by experts from North America and Europe. The organisation of the text has been divided into three sections: pre-operative considerations, intra-operative considerations and post-operative problems, with a number of separate chapters in each section. The authors include specialists in Anaesthesiology, Critical Care, Microbiology, Nutrition, Hygiene and Surgery. This diversity of authorship in any text places unusual demands on the editors to ensure that unnecessary duplication or redundancy is avoided and that a similar style is maintained throughout. Unfortunately, this has only in part been achieved. While the overall format is maintained throughout, the content of each chapter varies considerably. In some cases, such as the chapter on 'Vectors of infection in the operating room,' this is of questionable value being more anecdotal than the expected review of the field. Indeed, the concluding remarks to this chapter are motherhood dogma which many anaesthesiologists will immediately recognise as typical of remarks sometimes heard coming from the other side of the ether screen. For example, such advice to the anaesthetist as 'respect the respiratory tract; be gentle and avoid needless entry "or" set an example - detect breaches in technique, and guide the thoughtless and inept to performance directed to safe care of the patient' while generally true, hardly needs the performance given by the author of this particular chapter - a specialist in Surgery.

Despite the occasional lapse such as the above example, the overall quality of this text is high.

Several chapters provide excellent comprehensive reviews of selected topics, such as those in the section on pre-operative consideration covering the host defense mechanisms, the effects of anaesthesia, care of the transplant patient or the burns patient, sterilization of equipment and antibiotic therapy for prevention of post-operative infection, all of which are clearly written and cover each area in some detail.

The chapter on 'post-operative respiratory failure: current concepts, physiopathology and treatment' deserves special mention. An easily read yet detailed review of this area in which many practicing anaesthetists are involved, is one of the best to appear in print in recent years, amply supplemented by figures and tables illustrating the more important concepts and clinical data. Similarly, the chapter on nutritional support in post-traumatic or septic patients is of particular value since it provides up-to-date information upon which fluid and nutritional regimes can be applied at the bedside.

The book is a welcome addition to the literature on the topic of infection in the surgical patient and certainly merits a place in the anaesthetic department library. It is a valuable reference text for anaesthetists, surgeons and students alike, although I doubt that, given the many competing pressures on the limited reading time available to the busy clinician, it will be opened and perused as often as it undoubtedly deserves.

James B. Forrest, MD
Department of Anesthesia
McMaster University

Shock Trauma/Critical Care Manual

*By R.A. Cowley, MD and C.M. Dunham, MD,
University Park Press, \$49.95 us*

This is largely the description of methods, practice, philosophy and protocols developed in the management of multiple trauma and critical care problems over 20 years at the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services. The material is presented in a voluminous 12 sections, with 39 chapters and an appendix.

The format is clearly the one of the 'whole intensivist catalog' with considerable useful information and lists of differential diagnoses, symp-

toms, signs, in a therapeutic 'cookbook' approach.

The book has a well-designed cross-indexing system and a very clear outline format. The outstanding sections and chapters are the ones regarding initial evaluation and management, systems injury and system failure.

Coverage of many areas in spotty (eg anaesthetic considerations) and some chapters appear to be included for completeness sake, although they do call attention to the whole gamut of problems presented to the critical care area: death and dying, psychiatric counselling, rehabilitation, organization and management.

Unfortunately not a single reference is added to the text and the book format should be made pocket size so that its distinctly practical character would be at its best. Despite its limitations this book will be very useful to the surgeon, anaesthetist, house officer and nurse as a comprehensive trauma and acute care reference manual.

Marco Ghignone, MD
Department of Anaesthesia and
Intensive Care Units
University of Manitoba