Book reviews

Anaesthesia in patients with ischaemic heart disease

David C. Chung, Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., Maidenhead, Berks, England. Price: £14.00

This single author 171 page monograph is one of a continuing education series intended to present new material on a large subject in a useful and succinct manner. Dr. Chung has, with some minor reservations, satisfied this objective. He has reviewed a great deal of literature and summarized current knowledge clearly in most areas. The text is easy and interesting to read, and subjects are presented in a comprehensible manner.

In the initial part of the book, the relevance of ischaemic heart disease to the anaesthetist, physiology of the coronary circulation, and myocardial energetics are well presented. In later chapters, digitalis and beta blockers are well reviewed and a quite detailed discussion of pacemakers is given. The intervening chapters covering myocardial protection, anaesthetic agents and techniques, patient assessment and monitoring, and management of intraoperative problems are generally good, although superficial in some instances. Examples are that the controversy of inhalation anaesthesia versus intravenous opiate anaesthesia in ischaemic heart disease is not adequately dealt with, and the brief coverage of cardiac output measurements and their use. The most serious deficiency is that slow channel calcium antagonists are not discussed. The text also contains some questionable statements, for example that noradrenaline is a pure alpha adrenergic agonist.

Despite these criticisms, this monograph remains a well referenced valuable review of anaesthesia for patients with ischaemic heart disease. It can be recommended to students and practicing anaesthetists interested in reading a concise review of the subject.

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Intensive care

E. Sherwood Jones, 1982, University Park Press, Baltimore. \$39.95 us

This multi-authored collection of essays on varied topics relevant to the Intensive Care Unit represents many medical disciplines and five countries. Each chapter deals with a separate topic. In all cases, there is a helpful index at the beginning of each chapter. In most cases, there is an organized, succinct and clinically applicable approach to the subject addressed. Each chapter is adequately referenced. However, there is little attempt to provide continuity between chapters by means of a basic outline or approach to the patient.

The topics, in general, cover most aspects of daily ICU care. The chapters on parenteral nutrition, acute poisoning and spinal cord injuries appear especially well organized. The final two chapters do not add much to intensive care management. They deal with the Recovery Room and the U.K. training of ICU nurses. There is unfortunately little mention made of invasive haemodynamic monitoring and manipulation.

This book is a good source book for the Intensive Care Unit. The selected subjects are dealt with informatively and the mode of presentation should appeal to resident, consultant and nursing staff. It should be part of any general ICU library.

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Advances in pain research and therapy

Raven Press Medical and Scientific Publishers, New York, \$39.00 us

This is yet another volume in a series of books devoted to publishing the proceedings of major congresses on pain. In contrast to its predecessors, this one deals with a limited subject, namely the management of "pancoast syndrome" (superior

pulmonary sulcus syndrome). The book is divided into three parts and only the third one deals with actual "pain management" of the condition, whereas the preceding two sections contain papers on "basic considerations" and "anti-cancer therapy." Thus the volume is devoted to an in-depth study of the entire subject and therefore should appeal not only to algologists and anaesthetists involved in the treatment of pain, but also to a much wider audience, such as oncologists, surgeons, epidemiologists, psychologists, psychiatrists and clinical pharmacologists. As is usual for this series, the book is well presented, the printing, paper and illustrations are excellent, and the subject index comprehensive.

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Obstetric analgesia and anaesthesia

J. Selwyn Crawford, Churchill Livingstone,
Academic Press Canada 1982, \$19.50

This book is the first in a series of single author monographs on specific aspects of obstetric care. It is written primarily for residents in obstetrics and gynaecology and those obstetricians who wish to keep themselves up to date.

There are five well written, easy to read chapters, covering the following topics: the pharmacology of obstetric analgesia and anaesthesia, relief from pain and anxiety in labour, caesarean section anaesthesia, aspiration of gastric contents and complications (obstetric and non-obstetric) affecting anaesthetic practice. The information provided is important and well referenced. The concise and convenient format of this text is of obvious value to the busy obstetric resident or practicing obstetrician who does not have the time to pursue the concerns of the anaesthetist in greater depth.

One would expect some single author texts to reveal the personality and prejudices of the author. This is true for this book, as some of the author's opinions and those of some North American authorities would differ. The opposing view is often not sufficiently discussed and the interested reader will not find the references needed to adequately re-

search many controversial areas. There are also some areas where the reviewer felt that more details were required, e.g. choice of anaesthetic agent for continuous epidural or general anaesthesia. By confining discussion of anaesthetic agents to only those available in the UK, the content is lacking for the practicing anaesthetist in North America.

There is one objective of this book as stated in the foreword and on the jacket which requires further comment. One is led to believe that an understanding of the contents of this text will enable an obstetrician to provide the required techniques for their patients. Obstetricians in North America (and I suspect in Europe also) are not trained to administer anaesthesia nor should they be placed in this situation. Certainly, reading of this text does not provide adequate depth of theory, techniques or skills to enable one to do so.

I would recommend this text to the obstetrician or obstetric resident who wishes to understand the basic principles of obstetric anaesthesia. Also, nurses working in the delivery room would greatly benefit from this text. However, if an anaesthetist or anaesthetist-in-training is looking for an in-depth textbook of obstetric anaesthesia, they should look elsewhere. It is, however, a well-presented overview of the subject.

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Drug disposition in anesthesia

D.R. Stanski and W.D. Watkins, 1982. Grune & Stratton Inc., New York, \$24.50 us

The practice of anaesthesia has long been the meeting place of the clinician and the pharmacologist. Now that it is possible to measure blood concentrations of most of the drugs used by the anaesthetist, the understanding of what the body does to them (pharmacokinetics) is increasingly important. Drs. Stanski and Watkins have produced a timely text to explain the science to the clinician rather than to the mathematician.

The text is divided into six chapters. The first two are descriptions of the principles of pharmacokinetics and biotransformation. The first is a model

of clarity of this difficult subject. The last four chapters describe, respectively, the pharmacokinetic behaviour of the intravenous anaesthetics, muscle relaxants, narcotics and benzodiazepines.

It would be churlish to criticize such a bold and successful endeavour. The sins are of omission rather than commission. Notable exclusions include the principles of continuous infusion of drugs, and alfathesin as an induction agent. Why is the onset of action of succinylcholine quicker than pancuronium? These are soon forgotten and replaced by gems such as "a half-life of one minute in a mouse is equivalent to 8 minutes in a human being and 16 minutes in a stingray." It is a pity that far too few of us achieve "the clinical goal of matching drug therapy to individual pharmacokinetic profiles." The book is excellent. It should be bought, read, re-read and then stored in a safe place. Few copies will survive exposure in a medical library.

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Recent advances in anaesthesia and analgesia – Number 14

Edited by: R.S. Atkinson and C.L. Hewer,
Churchill Livingstone, 1982. (Academic Press
Canada \$37.70)

Volume 14 marks the 50th anniversary of the appearance of Volume 1 of this series. The format continues as in the last two volumes, being devoted to topics of current interest, written by invited authors who are expert in the fields. The articles vary between the format, style, and length of a North American refresher course outline and the more extensive and completely referenced full review article. Overall, quality is excellent. Chapters include: Anaesthesia and cardiovascular diseases; The importance of pre-operative assessment; Metabolism and toxicity of volatile anaesthetic agents; Biotransformation of intravenous anaesthetic agents; Hypersensitivity reactions to intravenous anaesthetic drugs; Anaesthesia for day-case surgery; Blood transfusion; Awareness during surgical operations; The relief of post-operative pain; Extra-

dural and intrathecal narcotics; Chronic pain. For readers who are seeking authoritative reviews in the above areas this publication is highly recommended.

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1982 Year Book of Anesthesia

Edited by: R.D. Miller, R.R. Kirby,
G.W. Ostheimer, L.V. Saidman, R.K. Stoelting,
Year Book Medical Publishers Inc., Chicago

The 1982 Year Book is both the same as previous editions and very different. A very significant change is the introduction of a new Editorial Board, under the chairmanship of Dr. Miller. Now multi-institutional in origin, the Editorial board represents both varied geographic locations, as well as a variety of disciplines within the general field of anaesthesia. This change is a logical one in the life of the Year Book of Anesthesia and is one which is likely to greatly enhance the strength of the publication. Unchanged from the past is the basic format. The editors have reviewed 72 refereed journals from which articles have been selected for publication in summary form. Each article summary is accompanied by brief comments by one of the editors. The organization of the material, print design, use of figures, and adequate index, make the book very readable. The Year Book continues to be a most valuable publication.

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