Book reviews

Endocrinology and the Anaesthetist

T. Oyama (Ed). Elsevier, 1982. 366 pages \$73 (US)

This new book is not a general textbook of endocrinology. It is a review of some aspects of anaesthetic and surgical effects on endocrine responses, with some reference to anaesthetic considerations in selected endocrine abnormalities.

The contents include three chapters which summarize well the endocrine responses to general and regional anaesthesia, surgery and cardiac surgery. There are chapters devoted to the thyroid, vasopressin, glucose regulation in diabetes, adrenalectomy, myasthenia gravis and catecholamines. The quality of the chapters varies greatly. The chapters on vasopressin and myasthenia gravis are well-written and provide an objective summary of the literature in these areas, although the rationale for inclusion of myasthenia gravis in an endocrine review is mysterious. Other chapters merely provide an opportunity for the authors to summarize their own publications rather than critically review the literature in the respective areas. Two chapters are particularly controversial. The chapter "Hypophysectomy and Anaesthesia" is a detailed explanation of the surgical aspects of a quite controversial method of pain and hormone ablation in cancer, that of chemical neurolysis by instillation of ethyl alcohol into the sella turcica. The chapter on endorphins is devoted largely to the author's experience with intrathecal and epidural β -endorphin. In general, presentations of the clinical aspects of endocrine problems, as they apply to anaesthesia, are glossed over.

In summary, this book is not an all-inclusive review of endocrinology for the anaesthetist. Rather, it is a collection of selected essays of variable quality. It may have some value as a library reference for the endocrine changes associated with anaesthesia and surgery, but would be of little value in a personal library.

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Computing in Anesthesia and Intensive Care

O. Prakash (Ed). M. Nijhoff Publishers, The Hague, 1983, 462 pp. \$66 (US)

This book is a collection of papers presented in some form at the Second International Symposium regarding Computing in Anesthesia and Intensive Care. In it a wide variety of computer applications are mentioned. These include automated inhalational and intravenous drug delivery systems, as well as the monitoring and processing of physiological variables. The role the computer may play in predicting changes in physiologic status is discussed. This in turn relates to papers about computer-assisted learning. In industry and business computers have long been used for data management and scheduling of personnel. It is interesting to read of this in the context of anaesthetic practise. As one might expect this book does not contain a comprehensive account of any specific area of computer application. However, the book is strongly recommended to the tyro who wishes to obtain a general view of the subject and the more knowledgeable reader who will find something to pique his or her interest.

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Monitoring in Anaesthesia (second edition)

L.J. Saidman, N.T. Smith (Eds). Butterworth, Woburn MA, 1984, \$44.95 (US)

The second edition of this text has maintained the high standards established in the first edition by an exceptional group of clinical investigators. Understanding monitors and the act of monitoring necessitates an understanding of basic physiology and pharmacology. Chapters dealing with monitoring neurological status, depth of anaesthesia, body chemistry and neuromuscular blockade concisely review fundamental principles and summarize a clinical approach with an objective appraisal of techniques such as mass spectrometry and the EEG.

The necessity for a second edition of *Monitoring in Anaesthesia* was caused by the rapid growth of important advances in applied technology. The same factor will outdate this edition. For example, although a cumbersome ear oximeter is described, pulse oximetry to continuously assess oxygenation is not. Its underlying principles deserve to be detailed at least as much as $PtcO_2$ and systolic time interval measurement.

One notable aspect of monitoring that is not comprehensively evaluated was complications of invasive haemodynamic techniques. Improvements from the first edition include a clinically oriented discussion on the role of computers and a chapter on paediatric monitoring techniques. In summary, this text provides an overview for residents and clinicians of the state of the art – 1984 and would be a valuable addition to a departmental or hospital library.

The authors clearly stress the future trend in monitoring – a shift from an emphasis on data gathering to analysis.

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