Book Reviews

Pain Management of AIDS Patients

T. Janisse. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht
1991. \$65.00 (US). ISBN: 0-7923-1056X

This is a small volume in the series *Current Management of Pain*. It is stretching the limits of pain management to include this subject as a volume of its own. There is really only one chapter devoted to pain management and that is mostly about the pain of herpes zoster and post-herpetic neuralgia. The rest, although interesting and good, relates to pathogenesis and diagnosis. There was a quite fascinating general review of psychoneuroimmunology and the general problem of AIDS as encountered by anaesthetists, all of which is interesting although the chapters are often repetitive. There just is not sufficient subject matter to justify the production of this volume. A recent review by Clarke in this journal provides a more than adequate review of this subject.

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Clinical Anesthesia

P. Barash, B. Cullin, R. Stoelting (Eds.). J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, PA, 1992. 1760 pp.
\$135.00 (U.S.) ISBN: 0-397-51160-4

The second edition of *Clinical Anesthesia* has been published this year following the first edition by just three years. As stated by the authors (Barash, Cullen and Stoelting) nearly 90% of this text is either new chapters or significant revisions of previous chapters. New chapters on Quality Assurance, Cancer Therapy, Transplantation and Anaesthesia Outside the Operating Room are welcome additions. *Clinical Anesthesia* fulfils its mission to provide a comprehensive textbook of anaesthesia practice. Particularly valuable chapters include a discussion of research design and statistics, anaesthesia for thoracic surgery and outpatient anaesthesia among others. The weaknesses of such a comprehensive textbook are quite evident in such chapters as electrocardiography and paediatric anaesthesia where space restrictions reduce the coverage of material to a skeletal level requiring any serious student or practitioner to seek out an alternative source of the flesh.

At this time the only serious North American competition for *Clinical Anesthesia* is *Miller's Anesthesia*, 3rd Edition. Despite *Anesthesia's* two volumes and greater

page number (2400 vs 1700) the type size and spacing is larger and likely a similar depth of coverage topics is found. Not infrequently the list of references in *Clinical Anesthesia* is longer and certainly more up-to-date thus making *Clinical Anesthesia* a better starting point for a detailed review of a topic. Of particular interest is the inclusion of virtually identical chapters on anaesthesia machine systems in each textbook. The choice of Miller vs Barash among members of the resident staff is reminiscent of Pepsi vs Coke. In their place both provide the necessary refreshment.

Overall, *Clinical Anesthesia*, second edition, is an excellent comprehensive anaesthesia textbook and belongs in every anaesthesia practitioner's library.

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Standards of Care in Anaesthesia

T.H. Taylor and D.R. Goldhill. Butterworth/Heinemann Ltd., 1992, Toronto. 186 pp. \$87.50 (CDN)
ISBN: 0-7506-0063-2

According to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, standards may be defined as "something set up and established by authority as a rule for the measure of [...] quality." In this sense, anaesthetists are faced with an ever-increasing number of standards of practice set by regulatory bodies. To carry matters to extremes, "the authoritative body will reduce the doctor to the level of a mere technician, responding to situation A with treatment B and so on." (S. Feldman; forward). Those in search of a compendium of such standards of practice will be disappointed.

Webster's also defines a standard as "something established by authority, custom, or general consent as a model or example." The authors have chosen this approach to produce a minimum acceptable standard of care. They attempt to define the objectives of proper patient care but leave the precise method of attaining objectives to the clinician, recognizing there are many different ways to conduct an anaesthetic safely. Certainly this approach is more appealing intellectually, but is more demanding also. It amounts to reviewing and rewriting entire sections of anaesthesia textbooks. Unfortunately, this is impossible in such a short book (179 pages). This would remain a considerable (and controversial) undertaking even for a much more detailed publication.

The authors' principal merit is to remind us that there is no substitute for adequate knowledge and the intelligent application of this knowledge to clinical practice. The practice of medicine must not become equivalent to the obedience to a number of predetermined "standards."

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