Book Reviews

Complications de l'anesthésie et aspects médico-légaux sous la direction de *J.-M. Desmonts*. Collection d'Anesthésiologie et de Réanimation n° 29. Paris: Masson, 1992, cartonné, 208 pages, 17 figures. 250 F prix T.T.C. au 1.9.1992

L'identification de la morbidité liée à l'anesthésie et l'évaluation de son incidence sont devenues impératives aussi bien pour le patient que pour les médecins. Cet ouvrage envisage les diverses complications liées à l'anesthésie en commençant par l'évaluation épidémiologique de la mortalité et la morbidité liées à l'anesthésie générale et/ou locorégionale ainsi que le dysfonctionnement de l'appareillage. Les chapitres qui suivent, traitent des complications liées aux différents systèmes anatomiques et spécialités en anesthésie. Deux chapitres sont dédiés aux maladies spécifiques de l'anesthésie – l'hyperthermie maligne et l'hépatite halogénées.

Les deux derniers chapitres décrivent les aspects médico-légaux et l'expertise. À la page 171, le Me. Agostini cite un extrait de la cour d'appel d'Aix-en-Provence de 1969 qui a établi le principe de responsabilité personnelle qui fait que les fonctions chirurgien et de l'anesthésiste « ne sont nullement subordonnées l'une à l'autre ... » cette phrase pourrait apporter une certaine chaleur au coeur de plusieurs anesthésistes. Ce volume très bien relié contient une multitude de données épidémiologiques qui devraient faire partie de l'information fournie aux patients lors du consentement éclairé. Il s'agirait que chaque service d'anesthésie-réanimation fasse copie des excellents tableaux contenus dans ce volume afin que les anesthésistes possèdent des chiffres et pourcentage à citer aux patients lors de la discussion d'incidence de morbidité et mortalité afin de fournir un consentement éclairé. Ce volume, le 29^e de la collection d'anesthésiologie et de réanimation devrait faire partie de la bibliothèque de tous les anesthésistes.

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Kinetics of Anaesthetic Drugs in Clinical Anaesthesiology

White PF, editor. London: Ballière Tindall, 1991. 317 pp. \$27.50 (US) ISBN # 0-7020-1526-1

This monograph reviews the pharmacokinetics of intravenous and inhalational anaesthetics, neuromuscular

blockers and their antagonists, local anaesthetics, and vasoactive medications.

The chapter on basic pharmacokinetic principles introduces the concept of distributional, or intercompartmental, drug clearance, as well as discussing more "traditional" pharmacokinetic principles such as half-times, metabolic clearance, and volume of distribution. Shafer and Varvel's recent work, demonstrating the importance of redistribution in terminating the effect of opioids, even after prolonged infusions, is also discussed. There is also an excellent chapter describing the application of pharmacokinetic principles in designing regimens for infusing intravenous agents, and the hardware and software currently available for delivery of intravenous anaesthetics and adjuvants. Together, these two chapters comprise an excellent review of the principles and applications of pharmacokinetics.

The chapters on the pharmacokinetics of different classes of drugs contain little information that is not included in the pharmacology sections of the latest editions of comprehensive anaesthesia textbooks. These chapters contain errors that could mislead readers. For instance, the binding of thiopentone to plasma proteins is referred to as "unstable," as though this was the exception, rather than the rule – binding of drugs to plasma proteins is readily reversible. As well, important statements are often not supported by references, such as: it is "generally assumed" that children require lower doses of thiopentone on a $\text{mg} \cdot \text{kg}^{-1}$ basis; or that visual or tactile assessment of neuromuscular blockade is inaccurate. Both these observations have been supported by objective data published some years ago. There are also typographical errors which will obfuscate readers, such as contradictory statements regarding the role of presynaptic α -adrenoceptors.

This monograph will be useful to anaesthetists interested in the using pharmacokinetic principles to design methods of intravenous drug delivery. The shortcomings of the chapters discussing specific agents preclude me from recommending it for general reading.

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Post Anesthesia Care

J.S. Vender, B.D. Spiess. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1992. 381 pp. \$45.00 (US). ISBN: 0-7216-5649-X.

This book on postanesthesia care has some 380 pages in 23 chapters with 34 contributors. The overall quality and consistency of style are good and there is minimal overlap of material. The chapters cover general topics in postanesthesia care, problems encountered on a body systems approach, and problems encountered in specific areas (major vascular surgery, paediatrics, orthopaedics, head and neck surgery, ambulatory surgery, and obstetrics). There are also chapters on postoperative pain management and quality assurance in the recovery room.

Topics that were inadequately covered or not covered at all include: usual recovery process, respiratory function after anaesthesia and surgery, recovery assessment, history of the recovery room, design and staffing of the recovery room, legal aspects of recovery room care, recovery of thoracic surgical patients, and recovery of neurosurgical patients.

The preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative periods form a continuum and much of the basic science knowledge and concerns and considerations necessary for caring for patients in each of these periods are the same. Thus much of the material in this book can be found in many other books. This book attempts to organize the information to provide "an educational resource for health care providers involved in immediate postoperative patient care." Overall this book does a good job of doing this.

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Emergency Procedures

M.S. Jastremski, M. Dumas, L. Penalver (Eds.). Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1992. 470 pp. \$51.25 (CDN) ISBN 0-7216-5127-S

This manual of emergency procedures covers the gamut of interventions likely to be performed in a modern emergency room. Each procedure is covered in a step-by-step fashion which includes indications, contraindications, equipment, technique, complications and a section of "pearls and pitfalls." It is designed for the beginning physician and is meant to supplement direct teaching by a more experienced physician. The bias of the material towards the beginner is also the main weakness of the book, as most practitioners will find a good portion of the material to be of a remedial nature. One could learn a few

"pearls" after digesting the entire text, but the manual is not set up in a way to facilitate a cover-to-cover reading. Much space is filled by repeating certain instructions in each section such as obtaining consent and utilizing universal precautions and sterile technique. Their intent is to cover only one approach to each procedure and while this will serve not to confuse a novice, the experienced practitioner would be better helped by a manual covering a myriad of techniques. Some newer procedures such as external pacing and intraosseous infusion could be of benefit to a physician who has not recently completed training. Overall, the manual serves its stated purpose quite well but will be of only limited use at best to the practicing physician.

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