Book Reviews

Pain: Acute and Chronic

E.A. Shipton. Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, South Africa 1993. 299 pages. ISBN: 1-86814-241-8

This is a comprehensive single-authored text consisting of 15 chapters. The author has maintained a depth, quality and uniform style throughout the chapters. In the preface, Dr. Shipton states that his intention was to write a handbook on pain, both acute and chronic, in a style that was both simple and practical. This he has done admirably.

An in-depth description of pain, its pathogenesis and measurement is followed by an up-to-date review of the pharmacology of analgesic and coanalgesic agents as well as indications and contraindications for their clinical use. The chapters covering invasive techniques of pain management give non-interventionists an excellent overview of the procedures as well as a realistic perspective as to what may be achieved with interventional therapy. Psychological therapies, particularly those applicable to chronic pain states are briefly discussed. The rehabilitation of the pain patient is emphasized.

The final chapter titled "The Future," explores some of the current research into the biochemistry and pharmacology of pain and how this emerging knowledge may have an impact on clinical management of patients, both in terms of preventing and treating pain more effectively. This is not a detailed textbook on all aspects of pain management, but is a practical guide. All chapters have a comprehensive current reference list that enables interested readers to review topics in more detail.

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Manual of Orthopedic Anesthesia and Related Pain Syndromes

Ralph L. Bernstein, Andrew D. Rosenberg. Churchill Livingstone, 1993. 538 pages. \$80.00 (Cdn). ISBN: 0-443-08843-8.

As the practice of anaesthesia has become more sophisticated over recent years with the introduction of new technologies and the expectation of better care for seriously ill and injured patients, so the shelves of our libraries have filled with textbooks devoted to subspecialty

areas. This book, authored by individuals who practice at a hospital dedicated to orthopaedics, attempts to provide readers with a comprehensive view of orthopaedic anaesthesia based on the authors' vast experience – a so-called "how-to" manual. The format succeeds in certain chapters, such as The Fractured Hip and Total Joint Replacement, where perioperative anaesthetic management is discussed in relation to specific operations and is highlighted by case studies.

Other chapters, however, suffer from this anecdotal style. Chapter One, covering Rheumatologic Disorders and Other Medical Conditions, is superficial and fails to focus on important anaesthetic concerns. The chapter on Trauma, although containing some worthwhile tips, is disjointed and perhaps should have contained ATLS-type flow charts to lead the reader through this complex topic.

Several errors were noted: on the subject of Exchange Transfusion, the authors point out a problem with antibodies but then suggest the need for blood with "low titres of antigens"; Autonomic Hyperreflexia is explained incorrectly as uninhibited catecholamine discharge "above the level of spinal injury."

By far the best chapters are those covering Regional Anesthesia and Common Pain Syndromes, which are thorough and clearly demonstrate the authors' expertise in these fields. The illustrations in the Regional Anesthesia section are particularly successful in augmenting the text. Other useful chapters include Ambulatory Surgery, Pediatric Orthopedics, Scoliosis and Spinal Surgery.

In summary, the practicing anaesthetist who has a full background understanding of physiology may find some useful pearls in this manual. As a reference text or comprehensive guide to orthopaedic anaesthesia for the resident-in-training, this book falls short of its goal.

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Anesthesia for Orthopedic Surgery

J.M. Conroy, B.H. Dorman (Eds.). Raven Press, 1994. 478 pages. \$130.00 (US). ISBN: 0-7817-0165-1.

This American-oriented textbook attempts a comprehensive review of orthopaedic anaesthetic practice. The editors, Conroy and Dorman, have assembled 26 chapters written by 37 authors, mostly from Charleston, South

Carolina, to deal with the subject of orthopaedic anaesthesia.

The book is divided into three sections. The first, General Considerations, discusses a variety of topics from the History of Anaesthesia for orthopaedic surgery to tourniquet use. The second section, Perioperative Consideration, is quite broad, discussing everything from disease-oriented evaluation and management to spinal cord monitoring and finally massive blood loss. The third section, Postoperative and Pain Considerations, focuses on acute and chronic pain management.

Any criticism of this book stems from the fact that it is a multi-authored text. As a result the chapters do not follow a common format but, rather, vary from chapter to chapter. In addition, there is much overlap of several specific areas, e.g., SSEP monitoring, methylmethacrylate, fat embolus syndrome and scoliosis. Several authors have attempted to condense relevant aspects of anaesthesia care which have inevitably led to superficial discussions, e.g., the complex topic of cardiac risk assessment is reduced to three paragraphs. Unfortunately, the goal of the editors to provide an unique and comprehensive text of anaesthetic management of the orthopaedic patient has not been fully realized. The orthopaedic patient is not as unique as the authors believe. The entire contents of this text can be found elsewhere, in much greater detail. Despite these shortcomings, most chapters, individually, are well written, somewhat thorough and current. In addition the salient, often unaddressed, use of both the tourniquet and methylmethacrylate is well covered.

In a time of fiscal restraint and down-sizing, I cannot recommend this text simply because it offers little over the currently available anaesthetic encyclopedic texts.

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