Book Reviews

Anesthesiology Review, 2nd ed.

Ronald J. Faust, (Ed.). Churchill Livingstone 1994.
594 pages. \$69.00 (Cdn.) ISBN: 0-443-08986-8

Anesthesiology Review, edited by Ronald Faust from the Department of Anesthesiology, Mayo Medical School, is a ready-reference source for residents studying for their American Board of Anesthesiology In-training exams. The titles of the chapters follow the "key words" of both the ABA In-training examination and the new ABA-CME exam. "Key words" are the topics of the examination questions: candidates and their programme directors receive a list of "key words" of questions answered incorrectly. The first edition sold well: the book is now into its second edition.

The book is essentially a collection of study notes based on these "key words." Many of the 246 chapters have been written by the editor's residents, fellows and junior staff. As is frequent in multi-authored books, the quality and style of the various chapters varies widely. The form of the chapters ranges from a series of charts and graphs with little connecting text, to all-prose chapters. Some chapters consist of little more than multiple tables, which presumably are to be memorized. There is also some overlap of topics: for instance both chapters four and five discuss effects of position on ventilation, one as its primary subject, the other as part of a larger issue. The "facts" presented in different places are sometimes not quite the same, and require an explanation beyond the scope of the book.

The length of each chapter (three pages at the maximum) forces most topics to be covered very superficially. Only facts are presented: no discussion of their usefulness, universality, justification or possible alternative explanation is offered.

Certainly, *Anesthesiology Review* permits particular facts to be readily reviewed. Helpful features of the book are the reference list and suggested reading at the end of each chapter. Unfortunately, references are predominantly textbooks rather than recent reviews or original articles. The index, important because of the organization of the text, often lists where information can be found in table form. It appears to be a user-friendly and complete index.

Anesthesiology Review's place in the library of individual anaesthetists is uncertain. It certainly cannot be used for a "manual of anaesthesia," as it gives neither a sense of priority, nor a direction of action. It is not,

nor does it claim to be, a reference text. It lists facts, most of which are correct. It will have little value for residents who have been diligent to their studies during their training; the last-minute fact "crammers" may find some chapters worthwhile in preparing for their written examinations.

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Atlas of Regional Anesthesia, 2nd ed.

Jordan Katz. Appleton & Lange, 1994. 238 pages.
\$99 (US). ISBN: 0-8385-0452-3

This is the second edition of an elegantly illustrated atlas written by Jordan Katz, illustrated by John Brown. The main difference between this and the first edition is the addition of a welcome section on Paediatric Anaesthesia by Drs. Rice and Broadman which accounts for the majority of the 35-page expansion. The paediatric section also incorporates the use of nerve stimulation in the techniques. However, it might be helpful to include some details about how to use the nerve stimulator. The description of deep cervical plexus block is also expanded to show both the traditional method and the single injection technique.

How might one improve on this edition? Perhaps the written text could be expanded to include some indications and complications for each block. Otherwise, it is difficult to offer any constructive criticism of this atlas. The illustrations are truly outstanding. This is an excellent reference text for the anesthetist who teaches regional anaesthesia and for those who may be called upon to perform the occasional unusual block on patients undergoing regional anaesthesia for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes. Even experienced aficionados of regional anaesthesia need to refer to text books from time to time. Even at a price of \$99.00 (US), this is excellent value and should be available in every anaesthesia library and pain clinic.

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Mechanisms of Drugs in Anaesthesia, 2nd ed.*Stanley A. Feldman, William Paton, Cyril Scurr (Eds.).*

London: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers 1993.

44 pages. \$125.00 (US). ISBN: 0-340-55157-7

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. This multiauthor text on the mechanisms of drug action is divided into two major sections. The first explores general principles while the second addresses specific classes of drugs. General pharmacological principles are presented in an organized fashion, although it is quite similar to any standard textbook of pharmacology. An obvious attempt has been made to use examples from anaesthesia, and there is a chapter on the effects of anaesthesia on drug disposition. Several of the chapters include sections on methodology, e.g., patch-clamp, receptor assays, drug levels, which are extremely useful. The chapter on the mechanisms by which general anaesthetics act was somewhat disappointing in that so much time was spent on the older theories of membrane expansion and considerably less on the more recent theories. Fortunately, these were covered later in other chapters. Many of the chapters on specific drug classes were excellent in terms of general description of receptors and different types of membrane channels.

This book would be useful for all residents in training, in order to develop an appreciation of the underlying pharmacological principles for the drugs they routinely use in clinical practice. Anaesthesia staff would find it useful as a reference text to research specific topics of interest.

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Animal Models in Cardiovascular Research, 2nd ed. (revised)*David R. Gross. Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994.*

494 pages. \$169.00 (US). ISBN: 0-7923-2712-8

Every once in a while, one finds a text that is likely to be truly useful and a valuable addition to one's personal library. For those of us involved in cardiovascular research involving the use of whole animal models, such is this text.

It is loosely divided into four general sections. The first chapter describes the principles of animal selection, preoperative and preanaesthesia care, and the use of chemical restraint. In it can be found normal values for such things as temperature, CBC, arterial blood gases, and other biochemical variables. The second is concerned with the cardiovascular effects of the administration of

drugs such as opioids, tranquilizers, muscle relaxants, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, intravenous anaesthetics, inhaled anaesthetics, and agents such as ketamine and neurolept analgesics. The third section is comprised of a chapter dealing with the normal cardiovascular parameters from intact, awake animals. Finally, chapters 10 to 13 deal with natural and iatrogenic models of heart disease, including atherosclerosis and hypertension.

Each chapter is prefaced with information of practical value for the researcher. Various anecdotes are provided so that pitfalls in using a particular animal model can be avoided. The chapters dealing with specific drug classes are broken down into tables which describe the conditions of the experiment, the dose, the cardiovascular effects, and the reference from which the information was taken. The tables are subdivided by animal species and drug. For example, in the chapter on opioids, this includes dogs, cats, rats, mice, rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, pigs, sheep, horses, and primates, and agents such as morphine, meperidine, fentanyl, etc. This will be of tremendous value for anybody who is thinking about using a particular animal model for a research project and may save a good deal of time and effort.

For those of us who review grants and manuscripts for publication, this text should serve as a useful reference for normal values and for comparative studies so as to determine whether or not the work in question reflects a typical situation.

Minor criticisms related to the text include such things as the consistent misspelling of *opioids* as *opiods*, and at times a somewhat loose use of terms specific to anaesthesia. For example, ketamine is described as an hallucinogen, which it is, but should primarily be classified as a dissociative anaesthetic agent. In general, however, the text is likely to be of considerable use and is highly recommended as an addition to the bookshelves of those of us involved in animal research. It will receive a prominent place in my library.

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