Book Reviews

Clinical Management of the Airway

James T. Roberts (Editor). W.B. Saunders, 1994. 491 pages.
\$105.00. ISBN: 0-7216-3670-5

Clinical management of the airway covers many areas of airway problems with over 50 international (mostly U.S.) contributors with diverse interests. Apart from the involvement of the anesthesiologists, major contributors include otolaryngologists, plastic surgeons, general surgeons, radiologists, pathologists, intensivists, pediatricians, pharmacists, biomedical and electrical engineers. The book logically divides into four major sections: the anatomy and pathology of the airway (2 chapters), assessment of the airway (6 chapters), methods and problems of securing the airway (17 chapters), and management of specific airway problems (17 chapters).

The strength of the book is its global perspective in managing the airway. It covers a variety of issues which have not been adequately addressed or emphasized in anaesthesia literature. These include rigid bronchoscopy, acoustic and airway sound assessment, tracheostomy, intubation in abnormal positions, haemoptysis, drug interactions and the airway, airway infection, and long term complications of intubation.

Unfortunately, the weakness of the book also relates to its diversification. There are many areas of duplication (e.g., several chapters cover some aspects of fiberoptic bronchoscopy). Although many intubating techniques are described, most of them lack specific details. For example, the use of retrograde and lightwand techniques and Bullard's laryngoscope in managing patients with difficult airways were only mentioned briefly in several chapters. There was no mention of other techniques or adjuncts such as oesophageal-tracheal Combitube. Most of these techniques are recommended in the ASA practice guidelines for management of the difficult airways.

Obviously if a resident or staff anaesthetist is looking for a detailed description of a specific intubating technique, this book is not adequate. However, if one is interested in an overview of the airway management, this is a well written and useful book. In my opinion, this book has a place as a reference text in the library for both anaesthetists and trainees.

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Modulation of the Inflammatory Response in Severe Sepsis

J.M. Tellado, R.A. Forse, J.S. Solomkin (Eds.). S. Karger AG, 1995. 188 pages. \$165.25 (US). ISBN: 3-8055-6041-9

This text is one of a series of monographs in the Progress in Surgery series. While it is principally destined for the shelves of those with more than a passing interest in the field of the inflammatory response syndrome, the monograph provides an authoritative review of the current status of mediator research. As such it has value to both clinicians and basic scientists.

The monograph is functionally divided into three sections and an appendix. The first chapter provides the reader with the current definitions applied to sepsis, the systemic inflam-

matory response syndrome (SIRS), and multiple organ dysfunction syndrome (MODS) and introduces the problems surrounding the predictive value of current clinical scoring systems. Subsequent chapters describe the basic science associated with the physiological response to endotoxin administration in both humans and animals. Chapter 3, which describes the current role of inducible nitric oxide in the immune response to sepsis, inflammation and shock, was of particular value.

The second functional section outlines both the process, the problems associated with the preclinical development of anti-mediator therapy, and the significant difficulties that attend the design of appropriate clinical trials. The discussion is abbreviated by virtue of the space allocated, but gives the reader an appreciation of the difficulties encountered when designing clinical trials involving critically ill patients.

The major bulk of the work describes the various modalities of current anti-mediators. These include recent animal or bench research and where applicable human trials. The review is not comprehensive, however it does provide the reader with an appreciation of the current status of anti-inflammatory research and the possible avenues down which it will proceed. The appendix contains papers that detail the experimental techniques and results of three studies involving immune modulators in mice. These are specific to the immune modulator under investigation and the inclusion, even as an appendix, in a review monograph is of limited value.

Overall, the monograph provides the reader with a valuable overview not only of the status of immune modulation research but also of the difficulties encountered when embarking on clinically based trials. I can recommend the book not only to those interested in immune modulation but also to clinicians who will soon encounter such therapeutic approaches to the important problems of sepsis, SIRS and MODS in the critically ill.

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Réanimation des intoxications aiguës

sous la direction de F. Baud. Editions Masson 1995. 252 pages.
ISBN: 2-225-84351-1

Cet ouvrage se veut une revue exhaustive des données récentes touchant les principes de diagnostic et de prise en charge des intoxications aiguës. Soulignons d'abord le caractère résolument européen du livre. Cela se traduit par une abondance de références généralement négligées par les auteurs nord-américains ainsi que par l'évocation d'intoxications par des médicaments (nitrendipine, perhexiline, etc.) ou des substances (intoxication phalloïdienne, envenimation par vipère française) peu fréquentes au Canada. L'ouvrage est divisé en deux parties. La première est consacrée aux principes généraux qui devraient gouverner le diagnostic et le traitement. Le caractère hétérogène des différents toxiques rend la lecture de cette section quelque peu difficile en raison de l'aspect disparate des données qu'elle contient. La seconde

partie traite des spécificités de chacun des types d'intoxication. On y trouve des informations intéressantes et utiles, et c'est là que réside l'intérêt principal du livre. Chaque chapitre constitue en effet une revue pertinente des particularités associées à chaque forme d'intoxication. L'éditeur aurait cependant eu avantage à simplifier la présentation en évitant la répétition de nombreuses données (deux tableaux traitant respectivement des causes toxiques de coma convulsifs et des causes de coma calme, hypotonique, hyporéflexique se retrouvant tous deux reproduits dans deux chapitres différents). En résumé, malgré les redondances, il s'agit là d'un ouvrage intéressant qui mérite de garnir la bibliothèque des hôpitaux qui accueillent des victimes d'intoxications.

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Patient Controlled Analgesia

Edward Welchew. BMJ Publishing Group, 1995. 133 pages.
ISBN: 0-7279-0860-X

Patient-controlled analgesia has been utilized for approximately twenty years.¹ The clinical utility of the concept is well established. It is time for an objective and informative overview of the development, deployment, effectiveness and limitations of patient-controlled analgesia. Although there is a great deal of interesting information in this book, it does not fulfill the above goals. Like other recent publications on patient-controlled analgesia,² the authors extol its virtues while spending little effort on outlining its limitations. Once you have read the entire book you will realize that most of the essential information on the subject of patient-controlled analgesia is there, but you won't be able to remember where to find it! The authors are adept at editorializing and philosophizing, but do not do a credible job of objectively reviewing the now extensive literature on the clinical utility of patient-controlled analgesia.

In summary, although the book contains useful information on patient-controlled analgesia, it is poorly organized and provides an unbalanced view of the subject.

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REFERENCES

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- 2 *Heath ML, Thomas VJ.* Patient-controlled analgesia: confidence in postoperative pain control. *Can J Anaesth* 1995; 42: 956-7.