Book Reviews

Basics of Anesthesia, 3rd ed.

Robert K. Stoelting, Ronald D. Miller (Eds.). Churchill Livingstone Inc, 1994. 524 pages. ISBN: 0-443-08962-0.

Basics of Anesthesia, commonly known as the "baby Miller," tries to address the needs of beginning anaesthesia trainees as well as anaesthetists who need a review of the basic knowledge of clinical anaesthesia. Like previous editions, this text attempts to present the scope of anaesthesia in a concise and readable form.

The book follows a traditional textbook format covering the broad areas of factual knowledge that constitute the foundation of anaesthesia. Like previous editions, some basic science knowledge is presented, but it is the fundamentals of clinical practice that are emphasized. New or expanded sections added to the third edition deal with new areas of clinical interest such as postoperative pain control, anaesthesia for procedures outside the operating room, and trauma. The section on cardiopulmonary resuscitation has also been updated to incorporate the most recent standards of practice. Appendices outline current American standards of care for monitoring, regional anaesthesia in obstetrics, and postanesthetic care. In keeping with the goals of the book, reference lists are not exhaustive, but they are pertinent and up-to-date. The format has been modified in the new edition, increasing the number of tables and revamping their style so that they are more easily visualized and understood. There are few pictures, and diagrams are scarce and of uneven quality.

How can students and teachers best use this book? *Basics of Anesthesia* successfully presents the factual basics of clinical anaesthesia in an organized fashion at a level best suited for the early years of anaesthesia training. It can be used as a reference for medical students, a text for junior residents, as well as a review of basics for GP anaesthetists. It compares favourably with Dripps *Introduction to Anaesthesia* (Longnecker and Murphy, eds.), another commonly used textbook written with this audience in mind. Both of these books, however, are traditional in their approach. Factual knowledge is presented well, but neither include questions or case discussions which allow students to apply the factual knowledge that they have gained. Also, these textbooks do not provide the "recipes" of pocket manuals that some students find helpful in their clinical experience.

Basics of Anesthesia should be on reading lists and in libraries serving medical students and junior anaesthesia

trainees. This book can also serve as a text for GP anaesthetists in training or those needing a reference that concisely reviews the basics. It is just one element of a comprehensive teaching programme, however, because students also need practice applying the factual basics presented in this text to problems. Given this limitation, *Basics of Anaesthesia* is a useful tool for anaesthesia trainees and their teachers.

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Essentials of Critical Care Pharmacology, 2nd ed.

Bart Chernow (Ed.). Williams & Wilkins, 1994. 613 pages. \$84.00 (Cdn). ISBN: 0-683-01529-X.

This book is an abridged version of another text – the 3rd edition of "The Pharmacologic Approach to the Critically Ill". Both texts are edited by Dr. B. Chernow, editor in chief of the journal "Critical Care Medicine." The 30 chapters in the abridged text are selected from the 69 in the unabridged version and are presented essentially unchanged. In general, these chapters are very well written and thoroughly referenced. They encompass a broad and practical spectrum of subjects such as bronchodilators, colloids and crystalloids and bicarbonate therapy in treatment of metabolic acidosis.

This is a multi-authored text – hence, some degree of overlap occurs between chapters but, as noted in Dr. Chernow's preface, this is felt to be appropriate. Different opinions are indeed useful and stimulating and so discussion on such subjects such as "low dose" dopamine are found in many chapters.

There are four sections in the book. Section 1 (eight chapters) is entitled "Clinical Pharmacology in the ICU," Section 2 (five chapters) is "Resuscitation Pharmacology," Section 3 (13 chapters) is "Medication Groups" and the final section (four chapters) is entitled "Special Considerations in Critical Care Pharmacology." As the chapters in this book are reproduced verbatim from the unabridged version, a few concerns arise. Errors are also reproduced verbatim, eg., in the chapter on "Pharmacologic Approach to Stroke and Related Neurologic Emergencies," the doses of muscle relaxants recommended to intubate a patient with intracerebral hemorrhage are incorrectly listed as 10 mg/kg for succinylcholine or 3–4 mg/kg for atracurium. Also, information in some

of the selected chapters may be too detailed. For example, the chapter on "Pharmacology in Renal Failure" contains 19 pages of exhaustive tabulated information on dosage adjustments for ICU drugs in renal failure – this may seem excessive to some readers of an essentials textbook, whereas it appears appropriate in the unabridged version which is meant to be a reference source.

In summary, this is a 613 page soft cover book that sells for about one-third the price of the parent text (hard over, 1220 pages) and, therefore, it certainly meets one of the editorial goals of being "a more affordable reference source" for critical care providers. The information in the abridged text is up-to-date, relevant to clinical practice and is presented in an easily readable style. However, some readers might prefer to have shorter chapters on more subjects in an "abridged" version. One of the two texts belongs in the library of every anaesthesia department. The choice of whether to purchase the abridged version may depend on whether the choice of chapters by the editor in the shorter version coincides with your needs.

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Monitoring in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care

P. Hutton, C. Prys-Roberts (Eds.). W.B. Saunders Company Ltd. London 1994. 453 pages. \$175.00 (Cdn). ISBN: 0-7020-1407-9

This UK-based text provides an excellent reference source on the current state of monitoring in the OR and ICU. For the most part, the book is easily readable and well organized. The editors have insured minimal overlap of material and excellent cross-referencing of topics. When indicated, relevant physiology as well as appropriate historical and future developments are included. References are current. "Key" articles and texts are listed separately from the general bibliography if additional reading is desired. The index is very complete.

Most chapters are between ten to twenty pages and provide for a comprehensive overview of a selected topic in a short period of time. The text begins with a historical account of the topic (Chapter 1) followed by the very interesting development of monitoring in modern times (Chapter 2) which has essentially occurred in response to issues that have arisen in America. This is followed by an introduction to the basics of monitoring (Chapter 3) and computers (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 (The Electrical Hazards of Patient Monitoring) uses the European standard of 240V to make calculations and describes the British Standards in place to insure electrical safety although they note that these standards "differ significantly from those established in other countries; especially the USA ...,

whose standards are in some respect more vigorous." Canada's standards are based on those of the US. There is no mention, for example, of "line isolation monitoring" as an important safety feature.

The meat of the book is made up of generally well written Chapters (6–11) on non-invasive/invasive monitoring of the heart (including the latest modality of echocardiography) and gas/vapour analysis (Chapters 12–16). Specific monitoring of the nervous system (Chapter 17), neuromuscular junction (Chapter 18), body temperature (Chapter 19), body chemistry (Chapter 20), haemostasis (Chapter 21) and recovery from anaesthesia (Chapter 22) follow. Special situations such as the paediatric patient (Chapter 23), mother and fetus (Chapter 24) are also addressed. The final Chapter (27) tackles monitoring in remote locations (including the MRI scanner).

Other comprehensive textbooks on "monitoring" do exist in the anaesthesia literature (eg., Blitt, C. *Monitoring in Anesthesia and Critical Care Medicine*, Churchill Livingstone). I would certainly recommend this book to an individual or institution in need of a "monitoring" text, although not in addition to another complete reference book on the same topic.

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Touch, Temperature, and Pain in Health and Disease: Mechanisms and Assessments

Jörgen Boivie, Per Hansson, Ulf Lindblom (Eds.). IASP Press 1994. 533 pages. \$69.00 (US). ISBN: 0-931092-08-6.

This reference book provides a summary of selected topics from a 1993 multidisciplinary international symposium on current concepts of psychological and neurophysiological mechanisms of pain and the assessment of somatosensory abnormalities. Anaesthetists involved in the diagnosis and management of pain will find this an extremely current source of clinically relevant information on the following areas: post-therapeutic neuralgia, sympathetically maintained pain and recovery from peripheral nerve injury.

Residents and students may find the chapter on definitions of allodynia, dysaesthesia, paraesthesia and hyperalgesia helpful in understanding qualitative assessment of pain. Quantitative sensory testing, which to date has been poorly defined, is also clearly outlined in a chapter. This book would be a welcome addition to any reference library being used by pain management specialists or residency programmes.

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