Book Reviews

Neural Blockade in Clinical Anesthesia and Management of Pain, 3rd ed.

Michael J. Cousins, Phillip O. Bridenbaugh (Eds.). Lippincott-Raven Publishers, 1998. 1177 pages. \$169.00 (US). ISBN 0-397-51159-0

The long-awaited 3rd edition is finally available a decade after the last edition. As forwarded by Sir Robert Macintosh, this textbook must be the most ambitious project of its kind ever undertaken. With substantial development in knowledge in physiology and anatomy in the field of neural blockade and pharmacology of the regionally applied drugs, a lot of new information was incorporated in this edition. Every chapter has been revised and more than one-third of the chapters are new or substantially rewritten.

In the *Introduction* section, history of pain management was considerably expanded. In the *Pharmacology and Physiology of Neural Blockade* section, you will find one of the best reviews of the related topic. The chapter on *Modification of Responses to Surgery by Neural Blockade* is basically a new chapter providing a state-of-the-art review on this subject.

In the *Central Neural Blockade* section, one would not be surprised that the chapters were extensively revised and edited. However, the section on *Combined Spinal-Epidural Anesthesia* was underscored given the increasing popularity of this technique. In the other sections on peripheral nerve block, with the aid of vastly improved illustration, the chapters are clearly presented and interesting to read. There are a few new chapters in this new section, including the one on neural blockade for *Ophthalmologic surgery, Pediatric surgery and Complications of Neurolytic Blockade*.

With almost every chapter extensively rewritten, the section on the *Neural Blockade in the Management of Pain* is virtually a new volume II addition to the previous edition. The section starts with an introduction and concise summary of pain mechanism, followed by a new chapter on pediatric and neonatal pain. *The Physiologic and Pharmacologic Substrates of Nociception and Nerve Injury* was well summarized by Dr Tony Yaksh and represented a 'treasure trove' of references for both clinicians and research workers. The chapter on *Diagnostic and Prognostic Blockade* is a new chapter written by authors who recently published a review article on this subject. They used an evidence-based approach to appraise the neural blockade technique for chronic pain.

Finally, two new chapters on the role of neural blockade in back pain and the spinal route of analgesia are exceptionally well written by authors who condensed the vast literature on this subject.

In summary, this is the reference book that any practitioner in the field of neural blockade and related pain management should have.

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Anaesthesia and Resuscitation: A Houseman's Guide

R.D.M. Jones, R.B. Holland (Eds.). Butterworth Heinemann, 1997. 316 pages. \$37.50 (US) ISBN 0-7506-2960-6

This multi-authored text originating from Australia and the United Kingdom attempts to "help the new graduate to cross the bridge which spans the gulf between academic interest on the one side and clinical responsibility on the other." The text is divided into four main sections: topics related to anaesthesia; topics related to resuscitation; topics related to emergency care; and emergency care of recreational injury. There is also an appendix containing information on being "a street-wise houseman", essay writing, operating suite discussion guide, drug dose compendium and infusion nomogram.

The format chosen is intended to be "user-friendly" with predominately point form presentation throughout providing clear concise explanations. Issues related to patient safety are frequently stressed including when to call for assistance. The anaesthesia section of the text is particularly good for the non-anaesthesia resident. A possible oversight however is exclusion of the mention of the laryngeal mask airway or cricothyrotomy/tracheostomy in the sections on inability to intubate and airway management in trauma.

The index is not as complete as it could be and there are some problems in overall organization (malignant hyperthermia is in the section on Emergency care of recreational injury albeit in a chapter on thermoregulation). This is a text one must be familiar with in order to find information quickly. The 37 page "operation suite discussion guide and record of achievement" is an excellent guide to educators and students for an anaesthesia rotation. I am not sure, however, it

warrants 10% of the total book content given the overall target readership of the text. Greater use of references would be useful.

Overall, this is a text providing information in an easily read, straight forward format which would be useful to clinical clerks and first year residents particularly those doing electives in anaesthesia or involved in acute care medicine. It would contribute to the making of a "street-wise houseman".

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