Book Reviews

A Short History of Anaesthesia.

The First 150 Years

G.B. Rushman, N.J.H. Davies, R.S. Atkinson.

Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996. 218 pages.

ISBN 0-7506-3066-3

A "short" history of any subject is never easy to write. In this readable history the authors have wisely been content to address the essential facts briefly and to provide references to guide the interested reader in further study. The book provides a good overview of the development of anaesthesia from 1844 onwards. The content is enhanced by appropriate illustrations, short biographical sketches, and a list of key publications on the history of anaesthesia.

The selectivity of topics enforced by the book's brevity is a drawback. The discussion of anaesthetic subspecialties illustrates this. The development of cardiothoracic anaesthesia and obstetric anaesthesia are discussed, but not that of, for example, paediatric anaesthesia and anaesthesia for trauma, both of which have influenced our thinking about anaesthetic apparatus and techniques. Indeed, the authors' choice of the "subspecialties" in Chapter 13 (entitled "Evolution of Some Subspecialties in Anaesthesia") is misleading: prominence is given to general surgery and biliary tract surgery, though neither is truly an anaesthetic subspecialty and there is no account of the evolution of anaesthetic techniques for abdominal surgery; day-stay surgery is discussed as though it is a subspecialty; and electroconvulsive therapy – another non-subspecialty – is considered while some of the true subspecialties are not. A surprising omission is a discussion on the evolution of anaesthesia as a medical specialty. One page in Appendix I is given to the organization of anaesthesia in Britain (which indicates a bias towards events in Britain), but the emergence of anaesthesia into a specialty, particularly with respect to professionalism, is not considered.

Errors in the book are commendably few. For the Canadian reader, the misspelling of 'Magill' instead of 'McGill' on page 80 and the implication that Easson Brown did his work on ethylene in the United States rather than Canada stand out; the *Canadian Anaesthetists' Society Journal* is indexed as being mentioned on page 197 instead of page 196; and Canada comes up short again in the authors' failure to include reference to the date of formation of the Canadian

Anaesthetists' Society itself and to the publication of the history of the Society, despite their referring to these two aspects of the Australian society.

In general, however, this history of anaesthesia is a useful one. It should interest any anaesthetist with more than a passing interest in how anaesthesia has developed, and it deserves a place in departmental libraries. Meanwhile, perhaps the authors will consider the needs for a fuller, more accurate and comprehensive second edition.

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Critical Issues in Operating Room Management

Mark A Malangoni (Ed.). Lippincott-Raven

Publishers, 1997. 304 pages. \$69.00 (US)

ISBN 0-397-51636-3

This hard copy 287 page, 16 chapter multi-authored (29 contributors) text addresses a number of timely issues associated with Operating Room Management. The preface describes the importance of the operating room as a vital hospital energy source with its common goal: "the invasion of a human body in order to benefit the patient." Although there are vital and fundamental differences between American and Canadian hospitals, this is a contemporary text which transcends the border to reflect realities such as . . . "re-engineering must start at ground zero and reflect no loyalty to how an organization previously conducted business . . . (but) will be re-invented to meet current trends in society."

As someone intermittently involved in surgical suite design, I am aware of the paucity of good reference material on this subject. Co-authors Stengel and Allo provide a valuable primer. The text doesn't provide answers but rather raises topics or areas for consideration during surgical suite development. It was refreshing to note the authors reference to the importance of natural light in the operating room.

Reflecting on Governance and Leadership, Chapter 2 includes a frank and balanced discussion of the "booking habits" of our surgical colleagues concluding with. . . "change is best effected through evolution rather than revolution." The text espouses and explains sound fundamental business practices in the management of an operating room.

Another highlight of this text for me was a chapter entitled "Clinical Ethical Concerns in the Operating Room." Specific ethical issues addressed included the infectious patient or health care worker, Do-not-resuscitate order patients, informed consent and finally conflicts among operating room personnel.

The concluding chapter of this text addresses Preoperative Evaluation and Testing. A modified version of previously published work by authors S.J. Cohn and M.F. Roizen highlight the process and benefits of an appropriate assessment. In addition to stressing history and physical examination, they provide a caution. "This trend (decreased preoperative laboratory testing) would be good if the benefit from decreasing unjustified tests outweighed the benefit of ordering the useful ones. It doesn't."

Five chapters of this text are dedicated, in whole or at least in part, to discussion of infections and the operating room. Factual information of human immunodeficiency virus and hepatitis B virus are repeated in several. This duplicity detracts from an otherwise well edited text. The chapter on monitoring might be useful for a non-medical administrator but for a practitioner it is at best a catalogued overview.

In summary, I think this text will be a valuable read for all OR administrators and a useful reference for the departmental library.

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Clinical Neuroanesthesia

Armin Schubert. Butterworth-Heinemann, 1997. 406 pages. ISBN 0-7506-9502-1

This spirally bound book, written by a single author, is one of the Butterworth-Heinemann series of subspecialty-orientated manuals. The purpose is to provide relevant clinical information, particularly for anaesthesia residents, to help them prepare for the next day's neurosurgical procedure. The book is divided into two sections. The first of 16 chapters makes for quite rapid reading, as it takes the reader systematically through specific neurosurgical procedures. Each chapter sites anaesthetic goals, discusses preoperative evaluation, intraoperative considerations and emergence from anaesthesia. The final part of each chapter emphasizes the equipment required and arrangement of the operating room regarding the positioning of personnel and the patient. This is helped considerably by the inclusion of large schematic drawings showing these relationships clearly. Anaesthesia for spinal surgery, often ignored, has three chapters devoted to it. Particularly welcome are the chapters on epilepsy

surgery and neuroradiological procedures in which MRI requirements, are addressed.

The second section (concepts, complications and techniques) requires more careful attention. In eight chapters particular topics, such as brain protection and neurophysiological monitoring, are examined in detail. Anaesthetic protocols are given to help when one is faced with specific monitoring conditions. The last chapter adds an interesting look at the problems of emergence and postoperative neurological dysfunction.

The merit of a single author publication lies in the consistency and the clarity of the opinions. Here, the emphasis is always on the practical aspects of anaesthesia backed up by the author's own experience. These views are communicated in a straightforward fashion while alternative attitudes are mentioned. There is a certain amount of duplication, but this is necessary to allow each chapter to stand on its own, which was the author's purpose. In this way, the book provides a handy reference for upcoming cases.

The author's aim was to have a book which readily supplied clinical information specifically focusing on the planning of anaesthesia for a particular neurosurgical procedure. In this he has succeeded admirably. This book is excellent for residents, but also for anyone involved in the administration of anaesthesia for neurosurgical cases no how matter infrequently.

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The Pharmacologic Management of Heart Disease

Joel Kupersmith, Prakash C. Deedwania (Eds.). Williams & Wilkins, 1997. 581 pages. ISBN 0-683-04796-5

This is a compact book packed with useful clinical information which includes therapeutic guides and approaches to cardiac disease e.g., acute and chronic cardiac failure, with a superb section on the cost-effectiveness of drugs. This section of the text is highly recommended. The rest of the text is detailed and informative but somewhat tedious to read. More information on cellwall function, molecular biological principles and their relevance to cardiac physiology and drug effects would be beneficial. Chapter summaries with mini-outlines could be of benefit in a text such as this. This reviewer believes in maximal figures and tables in all texts. A diagram of the kidney with sites of actions for diuretics e.g., glomerulus, proximal convoluted tubule, descending and ascending loops of Henle, distal convoluted tubule etc. would summarize diuretics and synergism very simply.

This text may not be on every anesthesiologists book shelf but a copy should be in most Department of Anaesthesia Libraries. Inclusion of this text on a Cardiological CD-ROM would be a useful pursuit.

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The Anaesthetic Aid Mémoire

John Urquhart. Oxford University Press, 1996.
179 pages. \$34.50 (Cdn)

This is a short comprehensive manual of anaesthetic facts and trivia. It is a British publication and, therefore, a number of the facts, figures and recommendations are not applicable to Canadian practise.

The flow and organisation of the book are at times difficult to follow for review. Fortunately, however, there is a good table of contents and index. There are many instances where a series of facts are compacted into a tight paragraph when a column format would make it more readable. There are many abbreviations used which are not defined. Likewise many of the author's thoughts are recorded in incomplete sentences which occasionally leave you with the feeling that something is missing.

The book is interesting, however, in that it is very comprehensive. Topics covered include; preoperative assessment, anaesthesia equipment, regional block techniques, postoperative care; a broad coverage of physiology including cardiovascular, respiratory, hematology and fluid and electrolyte consideration; pharmacology with attention to basic pharmacologic definitions, TVA, volatile agents, relaxants, antiarrhythmias and paediatric dose calculation; a mini course on statistics, research, publishing and administration; intensive care and a pot-pourri of clinical scenarios and their management. As a practising anaesthetist, a few years away from residency training, I found the opportunity to review many of the basic science facts behind our day to day clinical practise, refreshing and educational. As a residency program director, I would not recommend this to my residents. Many of the facts, figures and recommended clinical management do not reflect current Canadian practise, which may lead to confusion for the resident.

In summary this is a comprehensive manual of anaesthetic facts and trivia, largely applicable to the practise of anaesthesia in the UK. It is interesting and educational reading for the practising anaesthetist. Its value for Canadian anaesthesia residents in training may be less than for trainees in the UK.

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