Book Reviews

Principles and Practice of Obstetric Analgesia and Anesthesia, 2nd ed.

J.J. Bonica, J.S. McDonald (Eds.). Williams and Wilkins, 1995. 1344 pages. ISBN: 0-683-00930-3

The preface to this second edition of *Principles and Practice of Obstetric Analgesia and Anesthesia* describes it as "an expansive, expressive and exhaustive textbook of many complex issues involved in providing the highest standard of care for the unborn baby and mother." To this one might add the word "heavy." This is a very large text (volume and weight) with 1312 pages, excluding the index. The bulk of it is such that it is not an easy text to carry or to hold while reading. This definitely is a "put on the table or desk and read" text.

While the majority of the chapters have been authored or co-authored by Drs. Bonica and McDonald, they also have drawn on a wide spectrum of contributors, with expertise in specialized areas, to make this a comprehensive, well referenced text. Its strong points rest in the basic science area (pharmacology, physiology, anatomy) and these chapters are accompanied by a large number of figures which enhance the text. The chapters on regional anaesthetic techniques and the pharmacology of local anaesthetics are extremely thorough and worth reviewing by every anaesthetist who practices obstetric anaesthesia.

Contributions by obstetricians and basic scientists make the sections on the physiology of labour and placental anatomy and physiology authoritative and complete. In other areas, such as the chapter on analgesia and anaesthesia for forceps delivery, there is a greater emphasis on "forceps" rather than analgesia and anaesthesia. The same criticism applies to the chapter on the surgical disorders in pregnancy. I would have liked to have found information on the use of propofol in early pregnancy and the risk of teratogenicity, but this was lacking.

The chapters on the medical disorders of pregnancy and their management are less consistent in quality. Some are comprehensive and well written while others are disorganized and lack an overall plan. The chapter on unusual case management problems duplicates much of the information covered in individual chapters on medical problems. This duplication adds unnecessarily to the length of the book.

In summary this is an excellent overall text and I would recommend its purchase, especially for the information provided in the initial chapters. Dr. Bonica passed away after its completion and it serves as a fitting tribute to him and his passion for the care of the mother and newborn.

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The Neuroanesthesia Handbook

D.J. Stone, R.J. Sperry, J.O. Johnson, P.F. Spiekermann, T.A. Yemen (Eds.). Times Mirror Professional Publishing, 1996. 516 pages. \$56.95. ISBN: 0-8151-8145-0

This handbook is a revision of the "Manual of Neuroanesthesia" by R.J. Sperry, J.A. Stirt and D.J. Stone published in

1989. The purpose of this updated edition was to provide a mini-textbook that is useful but also "fun and easy to read and fits easily into the back pocket of your scrubs."

This book is divided into 20 chapters most of which are written by different authors from three institutions. Many chapters describe the authors' management of their neurosurgical patients. Each chapter varies in style of writing, some are "easy and fun" to read such as the chapter on intracranial vascular surgery, other chapters are more tedious. The first chapter titled "Neurosurgical Anatomy" is an excellent introduction as it defined neurosurgical terminology and contains good illustrations of anatomy and approaches to surgical procedures. Chapter three on Pharmacology is an extensive review of all possible anaesthetic agents that may be used in neurosurgical patients. Most of the remaining chapters discuss specific neurological disorders or procedures. There is considerable repetition from one chapter to the next and even within the same chapter. The anaesthetic management is described in detail multiple times with similar information. The last two chapters provide a good overview of the management of neurosurgical patients in the post anaesthetic care unit and intensive care unit.

Overall, the authors have achieved the purpose they set for this handbook. Generally, the book is easy to read, the information is updated, and it does fit into your pocket. There are only a few general references at the end of each chapter. The best use for this book is as a quick reference on how to manage a specific patient. For this purpose, it can be recommended to residents, consultants and even practicing neuroanaesthetists.

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Radiology for Anaesthetists

Conrad Wittram, Graham Whitehouse. Oxford University Press, 1996. 172 pages. \$51.50. ISBN: 0-340-55790-7

This handbook covers areas of radiology that are of interest to anaesthetists and those involved in critical care. The authors provide two short chapters outlining the appropriate techniques for good quality chest x-rays as well as the interpretation of these chest x-rays. This is followed by a chapter on other radiological procedures including ultrasound, computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging and radionuclide imaging. The information provided is brief and meant only as an introduction to these imaging modalities. The remainder of the book is devoted to 80 clinical questions with associated radiographs. Answers are provided for each of the clinical scenarios.

This book should be viewed as a brief introduction to routine radiology. The information on routine chest x-rays is helpful. The remainder of the book is devoted to questions and answers. The clinical examples used are useful. This book confirms the difficulty of reproducing x-rays for publication in textbooks.

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Regional Anesthesia in Infants, Children and Adolescents
B. Dalens (Ed.). Williams & Wilkins, 1995. 550 pages.
ISBN: 0-683-09653-2

For anyone who is familiar with the first edition of this book, this is a definite improvement visually. The presentation is still dense but the illustrations have been redone and have benefited from the addition of blue highlights making the book more pleasing to the eye and easier to read. Nonetheless it is one of the most thorough and detailed books on paediatric regional anaesthesia available.

The book is divided into three parts: a first section on general aspects of regional anaesthesia in children including the anatomy and physiology of pain, the pharmacology of local anaesthetics, opioids and other drugs used for regional techniques, and more practical considerations such as indications and monitoring. The second and third parts are practical sections on the techniques of central and peripheral blocks.

The chapters on Anatomy and Nociception and Pain discuss the embryonic development of the nervous system and perception of pain and the anatomical and physiological changes that occur as the child grows. The chapter on pharmacology is thorough and informative although there are a few un-referenced statements such as the respective maximum dose of bupivacaine with or without epinephrine, or the use of 1/400 000 epinephrine in infants versus 1/200 000 in children. The very short chapter on indications and contraindications is disappointing and the recommendation that a regional block alone should be performed as a safety measure as much as possible in certain emergency situations in children with a full stomach is difficult to accept. Later in the chapter on Ambulatory Surgery the statement that regional anaesthesia is the only anaesthesia for choice in an ex-premature infant less than 60 wk post-conception is questionable. The author also states that children should be kept in hospital for observation for a minimum of four hours after regional anaesthesia. This would be considered excessive and unnecessary in most North American paediatric institutions.

The sections on central and peripheral blocks are excellent. Information on doses and concentrations of local anaesthetics is presented in detailed tables and the illustrations are precise and very helpful for the novice and not so novice person who performs the block. In all the chapters there is an extensive bibliography.

Overall this is a very useful book for trainees and teachers alike to have and consult when performing regional blocks in children of all ages.

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Serotonin and the Scientific Basis of Anti-emetic Therapy
D.J.M. Reynolds, P.L.R. Andrews, C.J. Davis (Eds.). Oxford Clinical Communications, 1995. 286 pages.
ISBN: 1-85403-1058

The anti-emetic properties of the serotonin receptor antagonists have recently generated a great deal of interest. This book represents the proceedings from a 1995 international symposium held in Oxford and includes contributions by scientists and clinicians from all over the world. This collection is biased toward consideration of the impact of serotonin antagonists on chemotherapy and radiation induced emesis.

The chapter entitled "The clinical approach to chemotherapy-induced emesis" provides useful and practical information. Many of these guidelines are also applicable to the patient suffering from postoperative nausea and vomiting. The book contains a brief mention of the major risk factors and current therapy for postoperative nausea and vomiting but this does not shed much new light on the subject.

The final section of the book provides several abstracts related to 5-HT₃ receptor research. Many help to define the role of this receptor in emesis caused by a variety of stimulants except anaesthesia. References are as recent as 1995 and follow each chapter.

The paucity of information directly related to postoperative nausea and vomiting makes this text less suitable for an anaesthesia library but it would certainly be useful for clinicians involved in the care of patients undergoing anti-cancer therapy. I recommend this book for medical libraries as a reference for physicians with a special interest in the control of emesis.

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