Book Reviews

Regional Anesthesia. An Illustrated Procedural Guide, 2nd ed.

Michael F. Mulroy. Little, Brown and Co., 1996.
327 pages. \$69.95 (US). ISBN 0-316-58906-3

I read with interest the 2nd edition of Mulroy's book, which shares with us the secrets of successful regional anaesthesia from one of the great havens of regional anaesthesia – The Virginia Mason Clinic in Seattle. Dr Mulroy is an accomplished teacher and practitioner of the art and science of regional anaesthesia. He was fortunate enough to have worked with one of the grand masters of regional anaesthesia, Dr Danny Moore. Dr Mulroy has produced a very readable soft covered text which includes practical information about every conceivable regional technique. The first five chapters are dedicated to the basic information required to perform regional anaesthesia with the exception of anatomy. The remainder of the text provides information about most of the commonly performed regional techniques including complications.

The text is well written and clearly illustrated. The Mason Clinic philosophy on regional anaesthesia is reasonably well disguised throughout the text but occasional lapses occur. Mulroy gives a balanced discussion on the use of nerve stimulation in regional anaesthesia but stops short of fully supporting it when he suggests that two people are required, one to do the procedure and the other to operate the equipment. I suggest that two individuals should be present when performing regional anaesthesia regardless of the method used!

I encountered one factual error in the text. In describing the "plumb-bob" technique for the supraclavicular block (p. 169) the author suggests introducing the needle at the midpoint of the clavicle. Brown's original description of the technique suggested introducing the needle immediately lateral to the insertion of the clavicular head of the sternocleidomastoid muscle. This point of entry is a couple of centimetres medial to the mid-point of the clavicle in the average adult.

In summary, this illustrated procedural guide on regional anaesthesia is well written and illustrated. It is very practical and an ideal text for medical students and first year residents in anaesthesia.

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Musculoskeletal Pain Emanating from the Head and Neck

Murray E. Allen (Ed.). Haworth Medical Press, 1996.
187 pages. \$34.95 (US). ISBN 0-7890-0005-9

I strongly recommend this small volume to all anaesthetists and others involved in the treatment of chronic pain. It is an agglomeration of papers presented at the 8th International Symposium by the Physical Medicine Research Foundation at Banff in October 1995. There are two editorials which attempt to bring a reader up-to-date and put the problem into perspective. This is done concisely and well. The second is by one of the authors of the Québec Task Force on Whiplash Associated Disorders. This is a landmark survey which will define treatment protocols for this condition for some time into the future. The brief resumé is a useful introduction. The book then turns to fairly short articles from the original presentations at the conference and starts with an engineering perspective by Gough who notes that whiplash still occurs with adequate head restraints and suggest, therefore, that there are other causes of hyperextension injury. Bailey notes that, at low speeds, there is a correlation with the speed of impact although Croft could not establish a threshold at which this occurred. However, it is suggested by Radanov and Sturzenegger that the severity of symptoms two years after impact are related to severity. In their study, they also noted that there were many other variables.

Taylor and Taylor, extrapolating from fatal motor vehicle accident post mortem examinations suggest that damage is mostly to the non-osseous tissues of the facet joints rather than to the vertebrae or discs. This site is also emphasized by Bogduk and Lord, who have extensively studied these joints as a source of neck pain and headache in many conditions. Much of the chapter is concerned with the clinical correlates of their work and discusses use of diagnostic facet blocks of which Bogduk is an advocate.

From this point the book is purely clinical. Vernom proposes an Index of Neck Disability and, like all indexes, is static and repetitive. The danger of such indexes is that, because they give a number they are taken to have real meaning – a conclusion that is not obvious. The origin of dizziness, sometimes associated with "whiplash" is nicely discussed. An attempt to

form a consensus on indices for manipulation of the cervical spine is marred by being heterogeneous (not just whiplash) and by the inevitable bias in consensus reports. Belanger ascerbically points to the acceptance of "standard treatments" for neck problems i.e., blocks and analgesics without good evidence for their efficacy.

The interest switches to temporomandibular joint disorders which is somewhat disconcerting, until it is realized that the articles by Dworkin and by Turk are included to cover psychosocial and other aspects of chronic pain. Readers of the pain literature will be familiar with these authors and they do a good job here of emphasizing the importance of these factors. It is interesting and gratifying to note that their articles increasingly emphasize the concept of both a physical and a psychological component to chronic pain. The final chapter by a psychologist, Main, and a physiotherapist, Watson, emphasizes this point and discusses the risk of development of chronic pain syndromes when movements are too guarded and controlled exclusively by pain symptoms.

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Drugs, Diseases & Anesthesia

Ronald J. Stern. Lippincott Raven Publishers, 1997.
511 pages. \$39.95 (US). ISBN 0-397-58736-8

Like the computer programme which preceded it, this book is not intended to be a comprehensive text, but rather to serve as a pocket-size, source of important information on three pillars of anaesthetic decision making: Patients' diseases, the drugs which they take, and the negative interactions which may occur with agents and drugs used by anaesthetists.

The book is arranged in three sections. The first two, "Drugs" and "Diseases" are covered in 75 pages each and anaesthesia in 300. This is a single author production so the style is uniform, database standard with subjects arranged in alphabetic order. This makes it easy to find nuggets of information quickly but, inevitably, repetition occurs as items are cross referenced. Typifying this, parts of pages 121, 141, 157 and 159 are identical. Occasionally, paragraphs are misaligned. For example on page 210 in the section on desflurane, the text refers to halothane, isoflurane and sevoflurane. Similarly, on page 232, in the section on dobutamine, the text refers to dopamine. The use of the alphabetic format means that antibiotics are covered as eight separate entries in the first section.

So much for repetition as the author states in the preface, omissions of important interactions are

inevitable. Are these important? Street drugs and over-the-counter medications might have been mentioned as could low molecular weight heparin, bupivacaine, ranitidine, famotidine, milrinone, prozac and dexamphetamine. From the wrong side of 50 one might quibble with the definition of "Age greater than sixty five" in the Diseases section, yet prematurity is not mentioned. This section needs expansion.

Small as it is this book could benefit from tighter editing. Acidosis and Alkalosis could have been combined as "Acid-Base Disorders" and Hypokalaemia combined with Hyponatraemia and hypomagnesaemia, both unmentioned, as "Electrolyte Disorders." Replacement of the page headings with a subject index at the start of each section might lead to greater clarity.

This publication presents a dilemma. If one possesses a PC or laptop computer should one cough up US\$ 99.00 for the database on diskette which may or may not be upgradeable or should one buy the book for US\$ 39.95 recognising that although conveniently packaged it is doomed to obsolescence as new information becomes available? Alternatively, should conscientious trainees emulate the industrious Dr. Stern and create their own databases? If they do then this book is a reasonably priced introduction to this important topic which deserves wider dissemination especially to those involved in aspects of patient care other than anaesthesia.

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User Guide to Anaesthetic and Intensive Care Equipment

Graham Arthurs (Ed.)
Saldatore Ltd, 1996. 216 pages. ISBN: 0-948047-046

This 216 page soft covered publication consists of 41 chapters itemizing various bits of medical equipment associated with the practice of Anaesthesia and to a lesser extent Critical Care Medicine. Each chapter is individually numbered from 1 to ____ Chapter lengths are from 2 to 72 pages.

Specifically collated from United Kingdom medical manufacturers and distributors, its utility is very limited for the North American reader. Pricing, standards and equipment models are European market detailed.

In reality, this publication is but a multi-manufacturer catalogue. Non uniform formats, even within individual chapters, make reading difficult. The information is sparse. For example, the chapter on Anaesthetic Machines has a number of categories (products, features, use, price, operation life, stan-

dard) but these are not consistently reported on for each anaesthetic machine listed. It would appear that not all equipment manufacturers were equally enthusiastic with providing information on their products. Pricing information is limited to "on request" and consequently is not helpful.

With the exception of eight full page colour advertisements for medical equipment and further scattered black and white half page ads, this publication is devoid of illustration.

Four appendices addressing Equipment Standards, Health Equipment Information (HEI) Evaluations, Reporting on Defective Devices and Medical Device Directives provide useful insight in comparing European practice to that in Canada.

The preface states "This is no mere catalogue, but an invaluable source of reference on equipment-related matters." I would beg to differ.

In summary, although there are occasional useful bits of information contained in this publication, I do not believe it is a worthy acquisition for the North American reader.

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