Book Reviews

Understanding Anesthesia Equipment. Construction, Care and Complications, 3rd ed.

Jerry A. Dorsch, Susan E. Dorsch. Williams & Wilkins, 1994. 797 pages. \$79.00 (US). ISBN: 0-683-02616-X

The authors have included the preface to their first edition (1995) of this text which reads "... finding it necessary to rely more and more upon increasingly sophisticated equipment. While this increased reliability allows the practitioner more flexibility in technique and more accuracy, it also requires a thorough understanding of the equipment. The responsibility of the practitioner for the safe and efficient performance of his equipment should be a fundamental consideration in his care for patients." Overlooking the non-inclusive language, this statement is still relevant today. The text is dedicated to all who serve in the multiple facets of the provision of anaesthetic care. Just the cataloguing of anaesthetic equipment available generates a massive volume of material. Dorsch and Dorsch are, however, very successful in avoiding a bland encyclopaedic listing. This is accomplished by the generous use of pictures, illustrations, graphs and tables. Chapter 19, Cleaning and Sterilization, departs from this illustrative approach and minimally detracts from an otherwise very readable book. The authors are to be commended for the concise text format; this text is still a single volume. Topics are extensively referenced. New to this edition are sections on manual resuscitation, oxygen concentrators, the laryngeal mask airway, double lumen and endobronchial tubes. Increased emphasis has been placed on circuit humidification and vigilance aids.

With each chapter this text clearly advocates patient safety in all aspects of anaesthetic practice by use of a common theme: thorough knowledge promotes safe operation.

In summary, I would recommend this book: to all anaesthesia residents as a "must read," to students of anaesthesia as a selected useful reference and to practicing anaesthetists as "money well spent."

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Handbook of Spinal Anaesthesia and Analgesia

B.G. Covino, D.B. Scott, D.H. Lambert. W.B. Saunders Company, 1994. 168 pages. \$112 (Cdn). ISBN 7-216-5606-4

With the increasing use of spinal anaesthesia for surgery this handbook is an excellent resource for both the beginning and the experienced anaesthetist. The co-authors (Covino, Scott, Lambert) bring a wealth of experience in performing spinal anaesthesia to writing this text, with the result that it is both practical and complete. The diagrams and photographs allow the reader to understand the anatomy, physiology and pharmacology visually.

The experienced anaesthetist will find it useful for reviewing some of the theoretical aspects of spinal anaesthesia and as an aid to teaching. The beginning anaesthetist will find the illustrations helpful in identifying the reasons for failing to identify the subarachnoid space and in understanding the mechanism of action of local anaesthetics. Every anaesthetist should read the discussion of syncope during spinal anaesthesia (pp 61-2) and correlate it with the reported cases of cardiac arrest.

The downfall of the book is that there are several typographical errors, missing words from legends and misuse of commas, instead of periods, in some of the tables. These, in addition to the method of hyphenating words that occur at the end of a line (e-qually), are distracting for the reader. Hopefully, these will be corrected in the next edition.

Although relatively expensive for its size (168 pages) I would suggest that it is a valuable book for any anaesthetist practicing spinal anaesthesia, especially if they teach residents.

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Anesthesiologist's Manual of Surgical Procedures

Richard A. Jaffe, Stanley I. Samuels (Eds.). Raven Press, 1994. 948 pages. \$90.00 (US). ISBN 0-7817-0012-4

This book is the result of a collaborative effort between surgeons and anaesthetists. The authors are mainly drawn from clinicians at Stanford University of Medicine. The book discusses the anaesthetic and surgical considerations of a wide range of surgical procedures. These are grouped by surgical discipline and sub-specialty.

Each section on surgical considerations begins with a brief description of the operative technique including different surgical approaches. It also presents a summary in table form preferred patient position, the operative site, special instrumentation required, suggested antibiotic prophylaxis, estimated surgical time and blood loss, closing considerations and postoperative care requirements. Also included is a table of mortality rates, major surgical complications, procedural codes, pain scores and patient demographics. The anaesthetic considerations follow and are logically divided into sections covering the preoperative, intraoperative and postoperative phases of the anaesthetic. The preoperative section deals mainly with the evaluation of the major organ systems of the patient and includes suggested special investigations. Preoperative medication is mentioned where relevant. The intraoperative phase consists of a description of the preferred anaesthetic technique as applied to altered patient physiology and is divided into the induction, maintenance phases. Fluid requirements, monitoring and positioning are discussed. For example, the sections on craniotomy included a discussion on the control of raised intracranial pressure and the anaesthetic considerations of the sitting position. Finally, the postoperative care of the patient is discussed. Appropriate management of common recovery room complications specific to the surgical procedure is presented. Options for the treatment of postoperative pain are mentioned.

The book has a comprehensive index and also appendices dealing with standard anaesthetic protocols, drug interactions and drugs commonly used during anaesthesia.

This work is largely an overview of the practice of clinicians from the University of Stanford, the details of which may not exactly match the clinical practice at other institutions. The references quoted at the end of section are somewhat spotty and vary from suggested additional reading to journal articles which substantiate a particular point. The book is strongly recommended to those residents in their first year of anaesthesia training who are likely unfamiliar with the operating room environment. More experienced anaesthetists may find this a convenient book to refer to when confronted with a infrequently seen surgical procedure on their slates. It remains a useful book because of the unique approach taken by its authors and the wide variety of surgical procedures represented.

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You Don't Have to Suffer

Susan S. Lang, Richard B. Pratt. Oxford University Press, 1994. 366 pages. \$27.95 (Cdn). ISBN 0-19-508418-7

This book was written for cancer patients and their families. It is co-authored by a science editor at Cornell University (SSL) and a physician (RBP) well known for cancer pain management.

The contents are broken into three major topics: (1) Cancer and Its Pain, (2) The Painkillers, and (3) Other Approaches and Concerns. Part one has a excellent introduction into the basics of cancer, the causes of pain in cancer patients, assessment of pain, approaches used to treat both the cancer and associated pain, and the role of palliative care. The WHO stepladder approach to the management of cancer pain is introduced and forms the framework for the approach to treatment of pain in the rest of the book. An excellent but brief discussion of Pain versus Suffering and the influences of psychological, cultural, and socioeconomic factors on our personal responses to life events, including pain, are presented. Educating the patient to be an "Active Health Care Consumer" is introduced in section one and becomes the major theme for the whole book. The authors hope that knowledgeable patients will ask appropriate questions, provide relevant information to their physicians, and be able to recognize good pain management skills.

Section two provides pharmacological information on analgesics, starting with the non-opioids and progressing up through the weak and stronger opioids. The authors have covered a wide range of analgesics and adjuvants and have discussed their indications, doses, cautions, and side effects at a level of language that will help most patients understand the role and use of each of these drugs. The chapter on "High-Tech Options" will be a disappointment to anaesthetists who provide spinal or neurolytic approaches to pain management. However, the authors have presented a very balanced approach to pain management and the space allotted to this chapter probably reflects the general use and availability of these techniques.

The third section discusses other issues and concerns which life difficult for the patient and family and make "pain" harder to manage. Gastrointestinal, respiratory, bleeding, sexual dysfunction and many other symptoms are discussed and practical "home" strategies and medical treatments are presented. Pain in children, the elderly, and in substance abusers is briefly discussed. The final two chapters are written more for care givers and discuss the common thoughts, feelings, and fears of cancer patients and what the family can do to address and help

the patient work through these emotions. The book ends with a very compassionate but complete description of what the family can expect in the final days and hours before death. There is discussion of the switch from a curative to a palliative mode, dying at home versus a hospice or hospital, and helping a dying patient to "let go." Grief in surviving loved ones and working through this grief, as well as descriptions of maladaptive patterns of managing grief, are described. The appendix contains a glossary of medical terminology, tables of information on analgesics and adjuvants, and lists of pain centers and sources for pain information in the U.S. The only information provided for Canadians is Health & Welfare's address in Ottawa.

In summary this is an excellent book and achieves its goal. It gives patients the tools to recognize and demand excellent pain management as well as providing a compassionate explanation of the suffering process which cancer patients experience. Physicians comfortable with cancer and the management of pain will be happy their patients have read the book, whereas less knowledgeable physicians may find their patients asking very difficult questions.

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