Book Reviews

Anesthetic Toxicity

Susan A. Rice, Kevin J. Fish (Eds.). Raven Press, 1994. 320 pages. \$98.00 (US). ISBN: 0-7817-0202-X

In their overview, Drs. Rice (toxicology) and Fish (anaesthesia) state that their purpose in writing *Anesthetic Toxicity* was to assemble current information on anaesthetic toxicity, focusing on clinically relevant agents. I feel that this volume is really two "books" in one: one group of chapters deals with the science of toxicology and the other deals with the clinical effects of inhalational and local anaesthetics. The book is up to date, and includes information on recently introduced inhalation anaesthetics. It is fairly easy to read, although by necessity, the language is at times quite technical.

Chapters 2 (Animal Use), 3 (Principles of Epidemiology), 4 (Metabolism of Volatile Anesthetics), 9 (Reproductive and Developmental Toxicity of Anesthetics in Animals), 10 (Reproductive and Developmental Toxicity of Anesthetics in Humans), 11 (Pharmacogenetics), 13 (Immunosuppression), and 15 (Biomarkers) are scholarly reviews of subjects not extensively covered in more general textbooks. There are some minor omissions. No mention is made of which animals are best for studying various human organ systems, and on page 46, sensitivity is mentioned twice; the latter entry is the definition of specificity.

Chapters 5 (Hepatotoxicity of Halogenated Anesthetics), 6 (Nephrotoxicity of Volatile Anesthetic Agents), 7 (Toxicity of Local Anesthetic Agents), 8 (Toxicity of Nitrous Oxide), 12 (Malignant Hyperthermia Triggered by Anesthetics) and 14 (Pulmonary Effects of Anesthesia) expand on topics that are reasonably well covered in standard textbooks of anaesthesia. There are several omissions and inconsistencies. Guidelines for safe dosing with various regional blocks is not mentioned. The chapters on local anaesthetics and malignant hyperthermia deal with the therapeutic aspects of their topic, whereas the chapters on renal and hepatic dysfunction do not. Little mention is made of the toxicity of other agents such as benzodiazepenes or muscle relaxants. The chapters on pulmonary effects and malignant hyperthermia seem out of place, as no other organ system (i.e., cardiovascular) has a chapter so devoted.

In summary, I would recommend this book to anyone with a specific interest in anaesthetic toxicity, especially to those wishing to learn about general mechanisms of toxicity and its study.

Donald Oxorn MD FRCPC
Toronto, Ontario.

Anesthesiology: Problem-Oriented Patient Management, 3rd ed.

Fun-Sun F. Yao, Joseph F. Artusio Jr. (Eds.). J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia 1993. 788 pages. \$69.95 (US). ISBN 0-397-51165-5

This book is novel among anaesthesia texts because it is written in a question-answer format. A broad range of topics is covered in the 52 chapters. Each topic is introduced with a brief case presentation and then discussed under the heads: pathophysiology and differential diagnosis, preoperative evaluation and preparation, intraoperative management, and postoperative management.

This is not a collection of rare or fascinating cases which challenge management skills but rather standard textbook material. The questions are short; they prompt for definitions, indications or management. Generally, they cover the rote material of the topic comprehensively. The answers are necessarily pithy and some inevitably arguable or dated; they definitely require judgement and supplementation from the reader. References accompany each answer but often point to the standard anaesthesia texts.

This book would be most useful for those preparing for examination. The questions can test recall and reveal deficiencies in factual knowledge. The book has been successful, having matured into a third edition. For the practising anaesthetist, not motivated by exams, other formats of continuing study might be preferable.

Michael Kolton MD FRCPC
Toronto, Ontario.

Les brûlures

Christian Échinard, Jacques Latarjet. Paris: Masson, 1993. 350 pages. ISBN: 2-225-83974-3

Comme son titre l'annonce, ce livre nous introduit largement à la pathologie du brûlé dont l'aspect anesthésie-réanimation est très bien situé dans la période aiguë. On y considère d'abord la phase initiale (48 premières heures) avec le bilan des lésions et la réanimation spéci-

fique du grand brûlé, puis la phase secondaire (après les 48 premières heures) avec non seulement le suivi de la réanimation mais aussi les aspects des anesthésies récurrentes de reconstruction chez un patient dont l'état physiologique est extrêmement perturbé. La globalité du problème est très clairement décrite, l'implication de nombreuses disciplines, la longue durée et la complexité du traitement sont évoqués ainsi que les troubles comportementaux caractéristiques du brûlé. L'anesthésiste y trouve des principes de réanimation solides, suffisants pour une confrontation potentielle à cette pathologie. Il sera incité à affiner ses connaissances s'il est impliqué dans la prise en charge effective du grand brûlé. Il sera à même de comprendre la spécificité des soins, le souci de chaque discipline impliquée et la nécessité de coordonner toutes les compétences pour parvenir aux meilleurs résultats. Notons que le chapitre Épidémiologie et Prévention est essentiellement basé sur l'expérience française.

Martine Pirlet MD CSPQ
Sherbrooke, Québec.

Anaesthesia: Review 10

Leon Kaufman (Ed.). Churchill Livingstone, 1993.
256 pages. \$57.95 Cdn ISBN 0-443-04853-3.

This latest edition of a series (Anesthesia Review) wishes like its predecessors to "bridge the gap" between published literature and textbooks. It is a multiauthored book written by British colleagues, includes various subjects, some very basic (physiology and evaluation of cardiac and respiratory function) and well covered in the North American textbooks and other chapters where the subjects are presented in a more original fashion: EDRF (chap. 5), information processing during sleep (chap. 7). The chapters are of unequal interest and quality, and most exhibit weak critical appraisal of the literature reviewed.

The refresher course lectures published by the major North American societies already fulfill the objective pursued in this review book, and it should not be the first choice for residents and practitioners.

Jean-Pierre Tétrault MD
Sherbrooke, Québec