Book & New Media Reviews

Landmarks for Peripheral Nerve Blocks - Upper and Lower Extremities, 2nd Edition

Didier A. Sciard, Maria E. Matuszczak. Philadelphia, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2007. 95 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0-7817-8752-9; ISBN-10: 0-7817-8752-1

In its introduction, this book is specified as being intended for use as a “pocket reference” for the anesthesiologist “who wants to refresh his or her knowledge quickly”. Its size and scope are appropriate for this stated purpose. Indeed, this second edition covers a complete range of upper and lower extremity blocks, includes the most common approach to each of the major blocks, and incorporates multiple approaches for several other types of regional blocks. The book is generally well organized, being separated into logical sections easily accessed with labelled dividers.

A brief, anatomic summary of the brachial plexus and the sciatic and lumbar nerves precedes each respective section. The anatomic descriptions and illustrations are accurate, with the exception of one error on page three in which the motor distribution of the radial nerve is attributed to the medial cutaneous nerve of the forearm. Each block procedure is described in point form, with sub-headings for the position, the relevant landmarks, and practical tips. Some procedures, for example the interscalene block, are described thoroughly and concisely. Unfortunately, in their attempt to be succinct, the authors’ descriptions are not always well-defined, and some sentences are overly truncated to be clearly understood. For several blocks, their description of the needle insertion point, and/or the orientation, is imprecise and, on occasion, is overtly confusing. The “tips” sections for some blocks incorporate useful summaries of important complications, including significant, potentially serious complications such as vertebral artery injection during interscalene block and neuraxial injection associated with psoas block. However, there are occasional inconsistencies in the content; for example, the authors make no reference to complications associated with certain major blocks, including arterial injection with the axillary block or pneumothorax associated with the paracostal approach to infraclavicular blocks.

In summary, the authors’ intent for this book and its layout support its potential role in providing a quick reference both for seasoned practitioners, with good regional skills who need to refresh their knowledge regarding a block which they perform infrequently, or for residents undergoing training in regional anesthesia. In the latter instance, this text might be considered a practical “bedside” supplement to more comprehensive texts on these topics. Unfortunately, *Landmarks for Peripheral Nerve Blocks - Upper and Lower Extremities* second edition falls somewhat short in meeting these goals. In order to perform all of the techniques described in this book, one would require a level of skills and knowledge in regional anesthesia that would render the text redundant.

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Management of the Difficult and Failed Airway

Orlando Hung, Michael Murphy. McGraw-Hill Inc., 2008. ISBN 978-0-07-150856-8; Set: ISBN 978-0-07-144548-1; DVD: ISBN 978-0-07-150855-1

I have had the privilege of reviewing the textbook, “Management of the Difficult and Failed Airway”, co-edited by Drs. Orlando Hung and Michael Murphy. Contrary to the viewpoint expressed by the authors in the preface of their text, this is not merely another publication on the subject of management of the airway. By combining their unique experience and expertise, attained from years of dedication to innovation, teaching, and research related to the contemporary practice of airway management, Drs. Hung, Murphy, and 52 collaborators convey a very clear and strong message to the reader.

The text is divided into four major sections and 57 chapters. In the first section, the authors review the approach to airway evaluation; the algorithms for airway management; the related pharmacology pertaining to tracheal intubation; the risks involved, and the methods to prevent pulmonary aspiration. In the chapter concerning airway evaluation, the authors

deliver a clear and practical message; i.e., the ultimate goal is to oxygenate the patient, and the best method of preventing a failed airway is to establish a strategy for managing the expected, difficult airway, and to quickly recognize the unexpected difficult airway, in order to promptly switch to alternative management plans. The chapter on airway algorithms is comprehensive and filled with advice and analysis on various approaches, both for tracheal intubation and for tracheal extubation. Special emphasis is placed on the need for the practitioner to master several techniques for airway management. The authors' emphasis on anticipating the expected success of mask ventilation, laryngoscopy, cricothyrotomy, and the use of supraglottic airway devices, in order to have a safe airway management plan, is a valuable teaching message for experienced practitioners and clinicians in training. The chapters which review the airway anatomy and the preparation for awake tracheal intubation are comprehensive and complete. The supporting graphics are useful, and they provide an excellent source to better appreciate the related airway anatomy. In the second section of this textbook, the authors review devices and techniques for airway management, and they include an extensive review of direct laryngoscopy and a description of the devices currently available for laryngoscopy and tracheal intubation. Important information is provided in a section detailing the advantages and the disadvantages of the different devices for supraglottic and infraglottic airway management and control. Included in section three are 43 chapters in which the authors describe a number of difficult airway scenarios, including the prehospital setting, the emergency room, the critical care unit, and the operating room. They also describe problematic pediatric cases, obstetrical cases, and airway cases in other hospital settings. The series of cases, together with the format used to present them, make this book a unique reference for experienced practitioners and for clinicians in training. Particularly noteworthy is the text's systematic approach to searching for the best evidence that supports the strategies used to solve each case. In the final section of the book, the authors address the issue of a difficult intubation cart, and they provide a very useful list of suppliers for equipment and medications to facilitate airway management.

A companion DVD, included with the textbook, consists of six chapters concerning extraglottic devices; laryngoscopic intubation; fiberoptic intubation; non-visual, tracheal intubation; videolaryngoscopes; and rigid, fiberoptic laryngoscopes; as well as invasive infraglottic, airway devices. Each video has an excellent format, and the images are very informative. The

DVD is an outstanding educational tool, which could be considered as a valuable stand-alone teaching aid for any teaching institution.

In summary, "Management of the Difficult and Failed Airway", co-edited by Drs. Orlando Hung and Michael Murphy, is a textbook which provides a comprehensive and solid reference for readers across different medical disciplines and different levels of instruction. It is a textbook that should be included in the reference collections of departmental libraries in Anesthesia, Critical Care, and Emergency Medicine.

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