Book Reviews

Transesophageal Echocardiography in Anesthesia

Jan Poelaert, Karl Skarvan (Eds). BMJ Books, 2000. 243 pages. ISBN 0-7279-1278-X

This is a multi-authored book with contributions from anesthesiologists, cardiologists, internists as well as surgeons. It is concise and easy to read with excellent illustrations as well as tables. I particularly liked the way they approached the various topics of echocardiography. In addition to the classical M-mode, 2-D and Doppler evaluation, the authors and editors have made a significant effort to address issues particularly relevant to the practice of echocardiography in the operating room.

The major drawback for this book is the shortness of its chapters. Generally speaking, the issues are addressed with too few details provided. For example, the evaluation of mitral valve regurgitation and its repair is well described; however, the chapter lacks a specific discussion of systolic anterior motion of the anterior mitral valve leaflet. The authors have partly compensated for this lack of detail by providing extensive references for each chapter.

In summary, this is an excellent introductory text, which is well illustrated and easy to read. It has more than enough information for level I training; however, I believed it to be insufficient to complete level II training. Nevertheless, I certainly think it is worth buying. It will simply not be the only text you purchase on the subject.

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Analgesia, Anaesthesia and Pregnancy. A Practical Guide

SM Yentis, D Brighouse, A May, D Bogod, C Elton.
Harcourt Publishers Ltd., 2001. 402 pages. ISBN 0-7020-2322-1

The authors wrote this text as they felt there was a “need for a shorter, more practically based text, suitable for both the trainee starting in the maternity suite and the more experienced trainee preparing for anesthetic examinations.” It covers the field of obstetric anesthesia from preconception issues to research on the labour floor. With 166 chapters and 402 pages, including index, most chapters are only two to three

pages in length. In essence, it gives a snapshot of many topics without going into detail on any. The text is easily read and although a multi-authored text the style is consistent. Keypoints are highlighted at the end of each chapter but tables could have been used judiciously to enhance the text.

The strength of this book is the brief reference list at the end of each chapter. In most cases the references cited are recent (1990–1999) and pertinent. By its nature there is some duplication of information. As the authors’ stated intent was to provide information for the trainee starting in the maternity suite this text would have benefited from more detail with respect to drug dosages for labour; for example, some recipes for low dose epidural infusions or patient controlled epidurals.

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Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics™. Studies in Endogenous, Herbal & Synthetic Cannabinoids

Russo E. (Ed.). The Haworth Press Inc., 2001. 113 pages. ISSN 1529-9775

This new peer-review quarterly Journal is the official journal of the International Association for Cannabis as Medicine (www.cannabis-med.org). The format is somewhat unusual for a Journal as it reads more like a small soft- cover book. There are some famous names in the Editorial and Advisory Board such as Drs R. Mechoulam and R.G. Pertwee. The *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* is devoted to the scientific examination of cannabis in clinical practice, the biochemical mechanisms of endocannabinoids and biosynthetic analogues. It targets a broad-based readership of physicians, researchers and other health professionals as to the historical record of marijuana, its putative clinical applications in modern medicine, as well as the biochemical and pharmacological functions of cannabinoids in animals and humans. The editor, E. Russo also tells us in his editorial introduction that topics pertaining to toxicology, psychology, social effects, and even pertinent political aspects of cannabis and cannabinoids will be presented in this forum.

The Journal is divided into classic sections: Contents (which includes the abstract of each article), Editorial, original Manuscripts (eight in this issue), Book Reviews and Instructions for Authors.

This first edition of the Journal presents five excellent reviews, some of them written by well-known cannabis researchers. Leo Hollister concentrates on the clinical use of cannabis, Drs Musty and Rossi present important new information on the clinical utility of cannabis in the treatment of nausea and vomiting in cancer chemotherapy, Vincenzo Di Marzo gives us a state-of-the-art review of the endocannabinoid system (Figure 2 in Dr. Di Marzo's review, is too small to be read although it has been published elsewhere in a bigger, coloured format), Dr. McPartland examines the anti-inflammatory effects of cannabinoid and non-cannabinoid components, and Dr. Lozano, a medical historian, provides a review of the use of cannabis in the Arabic medical tradition. Some interesting archival material on cannabis therapeutics at the time of Jacques-Joseph Moreau (de Tours), a French pioneer of psychopharmacology is presented. Finally, Dr. Gettman provides us with a fascinating political and scientific analysis of perceived inconsistencies in the legislative classification of cannabis.

Overall, this timely and unique Journal will attract clinicians, researchers and others interested in the clinical, research, social, legislative and historical aspects of cannabis therapeutics.

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