Book & New Media Reviews

A Guide to Pain Medicine

Joseph Chuan Shih Yang, Siu Lun Tsui. Hong Kong University Press, 2002. 420 pages. USD \$35. ISBN 962-209-544-5

« A Guide to Pain Medicine » est un livre pratique et concis sur le traitement de la douleur. Les auteurs, les docteurs Yang et Tsui, nous offrent une mise à jour de ce domaine en présentant les éléments pertinents des grands thèmes et des découvertes récentes. Les deux premiers chapitres font un court rappel de la physiologie de la douleur et son évaluation. Par la suite, la douleur aiguë et cancéreuse, respectivement, sont discutées et les grands syndromes de la douleur chronique sont abordés plus extensivement. Au plan thérapeutique, les approches pharmacologiques, les interventions anesthésiques, la prise en charge psychologique et les traitements de physiothérapie y sont tour à tour présentés. Chose rare dans nos livres de référence Nord américain, un chapitre discute de façon fort intéressante des approches traditionnelles chinoises dans le traitement de la douleur. La simplicité et la clarté des tableaux les rendent très pratiques. Ce livre est orienté principalement vers les médecins de famille, mais il est particulièrement intéressant pour les résidents en anesthésie lors de leur stage en clinique de la douleur et les anesthésiologistes qui veulent une révision rapide dans ce domaine d'expertise.

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Anaesthesia OSCE - 2nd Edition

Graham Arthurs, K.M Elfituri, (Eds.). Greenwich Medical Media Limited, 2002. 453 pages. \$45.00. ISBN 1-84110-087-0

This 453 page softcover book was written to aid those sitting the objective structures clinical examination (OSCE) portion of the British Royal College examinations in anesthesia as well as to help trainers to prepare practice OSCE stations. An OSCE requires candidates to rotate through a number of brief (five to ten minutes) stations where discrete clinical tasks are

assessed such as history taking, physical examination and interpreting laboratory data.

The book is divided into 14 chapters, each addressing a type of station. The station types include: history taking, physical examination, communication, resuscitation, anesthesia equipment, monitoring, measuring equipment, anesthetic hazards, skill, anatomy, statistics, *x-rays*, electrocardiogram, and data interpretation. Each chapter provides an introduction with hints to the candidate on dealing with the type of station followed by examples. Sample answers are provided with detailed explanations, diagrams, tables and photographs of *x-rays*.

None of the information provided is referenced. Some recommendations vary with current guidelines; for example, the dose of atropine recommended for asystole is 3 mg. Vasopressin, as an alternative to epinephrine is not mentioned. Some stations discuss pieces of equipment unfamiliar to North American practice such as the Nuffield ventilator and the Bourdon gauge. Despite these concerns, I believe this book does fulfill its mandate. It has limited relevance to Canadian training as the OSCE is not now or likely to be part of the formal evaluation process for the Royal College. Program directors might use this book as a resource for short answer questions.

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CD-ROM Reviews

The Lippincott Interactive Anesthesia Library on CD-ROM, Version 3.0 (2001). \$395 USD. ISBN 0-7817-2575-5

This product is a huge, vast, enormous, massive, gigantic anesthesia electronic resource, all on one slender CD-ROM. Contained within are seven full-length textbooks, 30 min of video, an easy-to-use search engine working across all seven textbooks, self-test material, and a simulation education tool (BreathSim Lite).

Let's start with the textbooks. Included is: 1) Cousins and Bridenbaugh, Neural Blockade in

Clinical Anesthesia and Management of Pain, Third Edition; 2) Stoelting, Pharmacology and Physiology in Anesthetic Practice, Third Edition; 3) Yao and Artusio's Anesthesiology: Problem-Oriented Patient Management, Fourth Edition; 4) Barash, Cullen, and Stoelting, Clinical Anesthesia, Fourth Edition; and 5) Handbook of Clinical Anesthesia, Fourth Edition; 6) Connelly and Silverman, Review of Clinical Anesthesia, Third Edition; and 7) Humes, Kelley's Textbook of Internal Medicine, Fourth Edition.

On entering the main menu, access to the individual textbooks is uncomplicated, and users are able to move among different chapters and textbooks with ease. Although it is quite possible to read these texts from a computer screen as one would read a paper book, most users will want to use this resource as a quick but comprehensive reference they can search for detailed information. Fortunately, the included search engine is very much up to the task. Users can enter keywords or Boolean expressions ("and", "or", "not" and parentheses) for searches. When the sought information is found, users can easily copy and paste the material into a Word document or elsewhere for later review. Users can also add their own notes to the text, as well as add bookmarks and print out selections from the material.

Connelly and Silverman's Review of Clinical Anesthesia is different from the other included products. It is an interactive quiz designed to assist in preparation for board certification or recertification. I personally found this to be the most useful educational tool offered, as I particularly enjoy this learning format. Between this and Yao and Artusio's Anesthesiology, over 1000 questions and answers are provided, most with links to further material.

The video material (28 clips, 259 MB) offers segments concerning regional anesthesia, airway management and transesophageal echocardiography.

I had little difficulty installing the software on a Windows 95 test platform. Although the product also works on Macintosh computers, I did not test this. Using the product was easy; I found the controls to be intuitive and straightforward to use. The only problem I encountered was getting the video segments to work (installation of QuickTime is required). There were also some minor glitches in formatting, such as errors in spacing.

As a test of Lippincott's customer service, I called the toll-free technical support number for the product. I was promptly met with a friendly and knowledgeable woman who quickly answered all my questions.

In summary, The Lippincott Interactive Anesthesia Library on CD-ROM is the definitive electronic resource in anesthesiology. I recommend it without

hesitation. My only suggestion is that the next edition be made available in DVD format. This way, there could be even more video and simulation materials, and perhaps even space for a small surgery textbook as well.

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Harvard Electronic Anesthesia Library (HEAL; 2001). \$395 USD. ISBN 0-7817-1408-7

Edited by Michael T. Bailin, M.D. of Harvard University, the Harvard Electronic Anesthesia Library (HEAL) was designed from its conception as a new means of self-study and review in the field of anesthesia. The authors' stated goals are to: "1) comprehensively cover the field; 2) allow for interactive training and practice through videos and questions; 3) provide self-assessment and review; and 4) enable us to keep pace with cutting edge technology and research". In this respect the authors have certainly succeeded, producing a valuable and dynamic work that is comprehensive, well-organized and well thought out.

HEAL contains 12 sections, with each section containing up to 14 heavily illustrated chapters. Almost every conceivable topic related to anesthesia is covered, including an entire section on the topic of airway management and chapters on molecular mechanisms of anesthesia, electrical hazards in the operating room, and many other topics not always covered well in anesthesia textbooks. A set of examination questions appears at the end of each chapter, where one can answer the questions, view the correct answers, and link to the associated text for more details. A "notes" feature allows one to view, add, and delete personal notes for a topic. As well, images and tables may be saved for use in your own presentations.

I found installation on a Windows 95 test platform to be particularly easy. I also found HEAL to be easy to use and navigate, despite a rich offering of text, references (many with links to abstracts), figures, tables and video clips. HEAL also has an excellent search engine where users can enter keywords or Boolean expressions ("and", "or", "not" and parentheses) for conducting searches. When the sought information is found, users can also copy and paste the material into a Word document or elsewhere for later review.

The program has its minor problems. It was designed for use with the Netscape version 4.72 browser and the Quick-Time media player (both are included on the CD-ROM), and I soon discovered that the use of other browsers or media players may lead to troubles in playing the video clips. Also, the "Back" button on the browser may not always return

one to the previous page. Users should also be aware that because HEAL is a Web browser-based product, TCP/IP must be installed to your computer before you can use it (if your computer can surf the Net, you will be ok). Finally, If you use a proxy server, changing its settings may be necessary.

HEAL has many strengths that readers will find to be attractive. For me, the vast assortment of high-quality images was what impressed me the most. Others will marvel at how well integrated the material is. Truly, HEAL represents the future of the clinical textbook.

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