Book Reviews

Complications of Regional Anesthesia
B.T. Finucane (Ed.). Churchill Livingstone, 1999.
 340 pages. \$80.95. ISBN 0-443-07536-0

Over the last two decades, the use of regional anesthesia as a sole technique or as an adjunct to general anesthesia has experienced substantial growth. In addition, membership in societies devoted to the practice of regional anesthesia has increased. However, the complications of regional anesthesia, perceived or actual, constitute an important deterrent to its practice. Dr Finucane and his team of 30 contributors from Canada, USA, Scandinavia, Australia and New Zealand have assembled an opus that aims to provide the most up-to-date information on common and uncommon complications associated with regional anesthesia and ways to prevent them.

The book consists of 20 chapters that deal with a variety of subjects ranging from the overall safety of regional anesthesia, pros and cons of regional *vs* general anesthesia, complications with specific techniques, local anesthetic toxicity, infection issues, catheter and infusing techniques, chronic pain complications, major neurological complications, evaluation of neurological injury after regional anesthesia, regional anesthesia in the presence of neurological disease, medico legal issues and some interesting case studies.

The chapters are well organized with detailed references that are as current as 1997 and the material is presented in a lucid manner with appropriate use of tables and illustrations. More recent and safer techniques such as the 'plumb-bob' supra clavicular block are discussed and safety aspects of blocks such as the paravertebral block, that are experiencing a rejuvenation, are nicely demonstrated. More recently recognized complications such as transient radicular irritation and cauda equina syndrome are also discussed in detail. Recent dilemmas such as neuraxial blockade in the presence of low molecular weight heparin and other anticoagulants are also reviewed.

In summary, this is an interesting, timely and much needed textbook that is required reading for the modern anesthesiologist, who will be expected to deliver regional anesthesia on an increasing basis in the future.

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Anesthesia and Pain Management for the Pediatrician
Lynne R. Ferrari (Ed.). The John Hopkins University Press, 1999. 200 pages. \$22.50 (US) (PB) \$55.00 (US) (HC). ISBN 0-8018-6077-6 (PB) 0-8018-6076-8 (HC)

This is an eight chapter, 200 page, multi-authored American book aimed at increasing pediatricians' understanding of anesthesia, the conduct of sedation and analgesia by non-anesthesiologists and pain management.

The book is written in an easily digestible, chatty and informal style. While principally aimed at pediatricians who may be asked to "clear the patient for anesthesia", reading this book would improve the general knowledge of anyone who refers pediatric patients for procedures requiring anesthesia.

The chapter entitled "Answering Children's and Parents Questions" would be of great use to anyone assisting in the perioperative process and in the development of family information tools.

The chapter on "Administration of Sedatives and Analgesics for Office Procedures" is succinct and is aimed at using safe standards and guidelines by non-anesthesiologists. The principle of $\text{mg} \cdot \text{kg}^{-1}$ dosing and titration are well-explained key points. It is debatable whether non-anesthesiologists should be administering *iv* ketamine or doing *iv* regional anesthesia but these techniques are also discussed.

The chapter "Administration of Medication for Pain Relief" has a comprehensive table of pediatric opioid dose equivalents. The main deficits are a lack of an approach to the management of opioid side effects and the management of opioid infusions.

While this book may be useful to educate non-anesthesiologists (including surgeons and dentists) about some of our pediatric anesthesia routine and special concerns, the main drawback to the book is that the content is too general.

The specific approach depends on the patient, the practitioner and the institution. Ultimately, the optimum anesthetic management of a complex pediatric patient requires timely communication between the referring physician and the anesthesiologist.

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Anaesthesia for Vascular Surgery

J. Bannister, J.A.W. Wildsmith (Eds.). Oxford University Press Canada, 2000. 337 pages. \$80.00. ISBN 0-340- 69204-9

This hardcover book has 337 pages in 18 chapters by multiple authors with two editors. The topics start with epidemiology and finish with a short analysis of cost versus benefit plus discussions of the scope of vascular surgery, risk, and anesthesia for the various types of vascular surgery. There are also five chapters relating to the cardiovascular system including a basic science discussion of cardiovascular physiology, dysfunction, preoperative assessment of patients at risk of perioperative cardiovascular complications, preoperative assessment and preparation, and perioperative management of the cardiovascular system. There is redundancy within the two chapters dealing with preoperative assessment, but both were very informative and give a good review of assessment of the cardiac patient for non-cardiac surgery. Concurrent disease assessment was limited to pulmonary disease and Diabetes Mellitus and only cursory overview of these with little discussion of management. A chapter on renovascular surgery and renal transplantation had good coverage of preoperative assessment and perioperative protection of the kidneys.

Overall I found the book to be practical and concise. It would be a good addition to the library of any department which deals with vascular surgery.

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