New Media

Review of Atlas of Anesthesia on CD-ROM. Volume IV

Principles of Anesthetic Techniques and Anesthetic Emergencies

Harcourt Brace and Co. Ltd. \$130 (US). ISBN 0-443-07507-7

This is the fourth volume of a series of CD-ROMs under the overall editorial guidance of Dr. Ronald D. Miller. This particular volume is edited by Dr. Kevin K. Tremper.

The underlying engine used is Folio Bound VIEWS, a popular but aging system often used for CD-ROM publishing in the medical community. The whole CD-ROM takes only 227 MB, so it presumably could be copied to your hard drive without difficulty should the need arise. I had no trouble installing the program and running it on an old 133 MHz Pentium computer running Windows 95.

Essentially, this product is a series of graphic images with associated figure legends. Beside each figure legend is a thumbnail image on to which one clicks to obtain a full graphic image. Unfortunately, the figure legends are lost when the expanded figure is put into view.

Another drawback to the CD-ROM is that the images are not accessible as individual files, making it difficult to incorporate them in your own teaching presentations. As far as I can see, the only way of incorporating the images into your own presentations is by using screen capture techniques. While many of the illustrations are superbly prepared, some of them are of particularly poor quality. For example, Figure 9A in Chapter 7 contains film sprocket marks that should have been deleted by cropping. Another problem is that the tables are presented as graphic images rather than as text and consequently are not searchable.

Finally, for an atlas that purported to deal with anesthetic emergencies, there was too little material on the topic of emergency management of the airway, one of the most common problems we deal with in clinical practice. While there are nice sections concerning aspiration, anterior mediastinal masses and the

management of epiglottitis, the sections on the ASA difficult airway algorithm and management of the cannot intubate, cannot ventilate scenario were notable by their absence.

Despite its limitations, I expect that the atlas will play a useful role in medical education. However, I expect that many individuals will find the paper version of the atlas more fun to leaf through.

For completeness, listed below are the titles of all the volumes comprising the series:

- Volume I. Critical Care
- Volume II. Scientific Principles of Anesthesia
- Volume III. Preoperative Preparation and Intraoperative Monitoring
- Volume IV. Principles of Anesthetic Techniques and Anesthetic Emergencies
- Volume V. Subspecialty Care
- Volume VI. Pain Management
- Volume VII. Pediatric Anesthesia
- Volume VIII. Cardiothoracic Anesthesia

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Speech Recognition Comes of Age

I can remember when I was a student in my early university days, years before the advent of microprocessors and personal computers, wondering whether or not I would live long enough to witness speech recognition software that would work. I dreamed of software that would allow one to dictate directly to a computer. (A victim of a traditional college preparatory school thinking, I had neither chance nor motivation to learn to type in high school. I still type painfully using only two fingers.)

I took my first plunge into speech recognition technology about five years ago, buying a package offered by IBM that would only operate under OS/2. After an enormous amount of technical effort on the part of both myself and IBM we got the system to work on a 486 laptop but the performance was so poor it was