Book Reviews

All About Anaesthesia

Jan Davies, Rod Westhorpe. Oxford University Press, 2001. 208 pages. \$24.95 (Can). ISBN 0 19 551089 5

This pocket book is meant primarily to help patients (or parents of young patients) understand the process of anesthesiology and addresses major questions regarding the anesthetic procedure. Presented in an easy to read format, the book examines, specifically, commonly expressed fears and concerns of patients related to anesthesia: preparation to the anesthetic, particularities related to patients, procedure during and after anesthesia, common complaints, possible complications, procedure to follow if something goes wrong, the patient's own preparation, possible questions to ask the anesthesiologist and equipment used in the operating room. Further, the authors describe the education, training and roles of the anesthesiologist, and reassure patients on the safety of modern anesthesia.

The originality of this book is that most of the content is presented through seven case studies featuring patients of different age groups, from three weeks to 87 years of age. Through an interview between the anesthesiologist and each of these patients (or parents), different concerns, questions and complaints these patients might express and experience before and after their anesthetic are explored.

Although this book is dedicated to patients, junior residents, medical students and other health professionals taking care of patients on surgical wards might also benefit from its contents.

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Statistical Methods for Anaesthesia and Intensive Care

Paul Myles, Tony Gin. Butterworth Heineman Oxford, 2000. 152 pages. \$42.50. ISBN 0-7506-4065-0

As the title claims, this 152-page book purports to provide a basic understanding of statistics for anesthesiologists and intensivists. The authors wisely point out that it is necessary to have an understanding of research methods and statistical principles for the evaluation and clinical application of new medical advances. Unfortunately for many practicing clini-

cians, exposure to "statistics" incites a major panic attack! Does this book help to allay the fears of anesthesiologists?

There are several nice things about this book. All of the examples used are from anesthesia practice or literature. For example, in describing types of data, ASA preoperative risk score illustrates ordinal data. The text is easily understandable and the use of jargon is minimized as much as possible. The book happily includes concepts of clinical epidemiology and research design as well as statistical issues.

On the other hand, the book has breadth and little depth. This is not a "how to do statistics" book, but rather a brief description of statistical concepts. The references cited rely heavily on a series on statistics published in the British Medical Journal in 1995/1996 and few original references are provided.

So who is this book for? It is not for those familiar with statistics as they would find this book too elementary. Conversely, those not familiar with statistical concepts, will find this book difficult as it is too brief to be an introductory text. The book will not likely allay the fears of anesthesiologists and intensivists, but may serve as a handy reference to look up definitions of particular items.

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