Book & New Media Reviews

The Pharmacology of Inhaled Anesthetics

Edmond I. Eger II, James B. Eisenkraft, Richard B. Weiskopf. Sent to us by Dr. Edmond I. Eger, 2002. 327 pages.

This textbook comes with two DVDs as well as a set of multiple choice questions as a credited CME activity.

The book has 16 chapters, which are well laid out, easy to read, and have little overlap. The basic science concepts are woven seamlessly with their clinical implications such that even the mature practitioner will gain new insights. For example, the discussion on MACawake, the "collision broadening" of desflurane in infrared monitoring, the bispectral index monitoring for different anesthetics, among others, are informative and insightful.

The DVDs present a video seminar expanding on the modules in the book, including a segment on clinical applications. While the DVDs support the book, the book is entirely suitable as a stand-alone tool.

Overall, the authors present a balanced viewpoint between desflurane and sevoflurane although at times a bias towards desflurane is evident. This is more so on the DVDs.

In conclusion, this offering is highly recommended as a review of the pharmacology of inhaled agents. Although it might not be appropriate for the junior resident, as a solid understanding of uptake and distribution is assumed, it does provide a unique learning opportunity for senior residents, fellows or experienced clinicians.

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Journal of Pain & Palliative Care Pharmacotherapy™...advances in acute, chronic, and end-of-life pain and symptom control

Arthur Lipman (Ed.). The Haworth Press, Inc., 2002. 120 pages. ISSN 1536-0288

Journal of Pain & Palliative Care Pharmacotherapy (JPPCP) is a new journal, combining the Hospice

Journal and Journal of Pharmaceutical Care in Pain and Symptom Control. It is published by the Haworth Press, Inc. and Pharmaceutical Products Press in a small-book format, four times yearly.

I received the inaugural issue, which contains editorials, two review articles, commentaries, a case report, letters, news, and book and media reviews. Missing from the entire first year are prospective experimental studies. Why read a journal which presents no new high level evidence?

The editors perhaps feel there is more to medicine than randomized controlled trials. JPPCP seems to emphasize reviews, and pearls from distinguished authors. It does this well. The clinical review of driving fitness and opioids had immediate meaning in my practice, and the review of methadone was second to none. The lead commentary was from the father of palliative care, Robert Tywcross, and was delightful and inspiring reading.

On the down side, the one real study in this first issue is at best shameful. It presents the successful treatment of a patient with myofascial pain with lidocaine patch, but later admits this is the only impressive responder in an open label trial.

Will this journal give tidbits and pearls relevant to practitioners in chronic pain or palliative care units? Certainly. But if the editors cannot find more experimental content, JPPCP should be considered only a source for news, views, and reviews.

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Pulse Oximetry 2nd Edition

John TB Moyle. BMJ Books, 2002. 182 pages. \$32.95 US. ISBN 0-7279-1740-4

Pulse oximetry has so enhanced the delivery of safe medical care that to do without it now seems unthinkable. As the author of this monograph states: "It must surely be the ultimate safety monitor for use during anesthesia, as it shows not only how well the patient is being oxygenated, but also that blood is circulating".

This book was first published in 1994 and now includes new chapters on the use of pulse oximetry in flying and high altitude medicine. The more recent use of fetal pulse oximetry and the potentially dangerous misinterpretation of pulse oximetry in the presence of dyshemoglobins are afforded their own chapters.

The author clearly explains the principles of operation of pulse oximetry, its relation to multi-wavelength co-oximeters, and the limitations inherent in this remarkable technology that we now take for granted.

This is not a “techie” book to be enjoyed only by a few. As a review of hypoxemia with clinical applications ranging from pre-hospital care to the emergency room, operating room, intensive care unit, ward and home this book is timely and easy read for the harried resident as well as the old hand. Those interested in greater detail and depth will find the references extensive.

An author who can say so much on so few pages about something as important a topic as hypoxemia deserves to be read by many.

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