Analgesia, Anaesthesia and Pregnancy: A Practical Guide

Steve Yentis, Anne May, Surbhi Malhotra (eds). Cambridge University Press, 2007, 2nd edition, 398 pp, paperback, US\$70, ISBN-13 978-0-521-69474-2

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This is an up-to-date, concise, practical handbook for students and practitioners of obstetric anesthesia. This compact little book of 398 pages is brimming with plenty of useful information.

The logical organization of this book is very appealing. One hundred and sixty-five topics are organized into four sections that progress from Section 1—*Preconception and conception*, to Section 2—*Pregnancy*, to Section 3—*Puerperium and after*, to Section 4—*Organisational Aspects*. The longest of the four sections, Section 2—*Pregnancy*, is organized into seven parts: *Procedures in early/mid-pregnancy*, *Normal pregnancy and delivery*, *Operative delivery and third stage*, *Anaesthetic complications*, *Problems confined to obstetrics*, *Problems not confined to obstetrics*, and *The Neonate*.

Each of the handbook's 165 topics is similarly formatted with the initial brief summary of pertinent, up-to-date information being followed by a list and discussion of the relevant *Problems/special considerations* and *Management options*, a bulleted list of *Key Points* in a highlighted box, and pertinent recent *References* (1992 onward). Useful schematic diagrams highlight important nerve and spinal cord anatomy, and tables are used to summarize important information throughout the text. The index is relatively comprehensive, and the cross-referencing within the text is

helpful. One drawback for Canadian readers is the use of unfamiliar British drug names; however, in some parts of the text, the authors do discuss the differences between practice and drugs used in the United Kingdom compared to those used in Canada/United States. Nevertheless, the basic information and principles of anesthetic practice are essentially the same in each country.

The text is clearly and concisely written with much useful information pertinent to obstetric anesthesia. The approach to a variety of potentially challenging clinical situations is logical and helpful. Important aspects of safe obstetric practice and practical management strategies are stressed in the sections regarding general anesthesia for Cesarean delivery, cricoid pressure, prediction of difficult intubation, failed intubation drill, and awake intubation. The *Anaesthetic Complications* section includes a discussion regarding common complications, and it presents a useful approach to evaluating peripheral nerve injuries following regional anesthesia. The two sections that deal with *Problems confined and not confined to obstetrics* and *The Neonate* succinctly cover key topics while stressing the most important considerations and management strategies.

Overall, this well-written little handbook is a valuable resource that provides a practical approach to many important aspects of obstetric anesthesia practice.

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