Clinical Anesthesia—6th Edition

Paul G. Barash, Bruce F. Cullen, Robert K. Stoelting, Michael K. Cahalan, M. Christine Stock (eds). Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia, PA, 2009, 1640 pp, ISBN-13: 978-0-7817-8763-5; ISBN-10: 0-7817-8763-7

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Published online: 29 August 2009
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The recent publication of this 6th edition of “Clinical Anesthesia” edited by Barash *et al.* coincides with the 20th anniversary of this highly regarded textbook—proof enough of its status. In all likelihood, most readers are well acquainted with the comprehensive scope, authoritative quality, and accessibility of information that this book provides. In the preface of the 1st edition in 1989, the editors stated that a “...truly modern [Anesthesia] textbook must support efficient, rapid use if it is to meet the demands of those in practice or training today”. That goal has been restated and sought in every subsequent edition, and this latest publication is no exception.

Drs. Michael Cahalan and Christine Stock were added as co-editors for this 6th edition and Dr. Stoelting is presented as Editor Emeritus. While major chapters continue to be authored by recognized experts, about one-third of the chapter contributors are new.

The contents of this volume are now expanded into the following eight sections: Introduction to Anesthesiology; Scientific Foundations of Anesthesia; Anatomy and Physiology; Anesthetic Agents, Adjuvants and Drug Interaction; Preanesthetic Evaluation and Preparation; Anesthetic Management; Anesthesia for Surgical Subspecialties; and Perioperative and Consultative Services. Although there is a logical allocation of chapters to each of the eight sections, it is puzzling why the Physiology section of the book includes the chapter regarding cardiac and respiratory physiology, while the physiology of other organ systems (e.g., gastrointestinal disorders, hepatic and endocrine function) remains in the Subspecialty section. Similarly, the Anesthetic Management section includes ambulatory

and trauma anesthesia, which might well be considered subspecialty areas in some departments.

To provide clarification and in keeping with the preceding 5th edition, each chapter includes an introductory outline and a list of key points that is indexed to the location of these items within the text. Some references are highlighted in the bibliography of each chapter, and although unexplained, they likely represent key references. Somewhat surprisingly, there is inconsistency among the preceding editions in giving the aforesaid references similar status.

With respect to content, there are two excellent new chapters, namely, “Inflammation, wound healing and infection” and “Echocardiography”. There is also a comprehensive newly authored chapter on cardiovascular physiology, although useful information on hemodynamic calculations and catheterization data was omitted. Similarly, the rewritten chapter on regional anesthesia contains good information regarding nerve stimulators and ultrasound guidance, but discussion of sympathetic blocks was removed. Various chapters include updated information on a number of topics, for example, dexmedetomidine, sugammadex, aprotinin, blood conservation using antifibrinolytics in a randomized trial (BART) study, airway assessment, obstructive sleep apnea, use of simulation, non-invasive cardiac output measurements, anesthesia for nonobstetric surgery in the pregnant patient, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation algorithms (referenced to the 2005 American Heart Association guidelines). While halothane and enflurane no longer receive much attention, long-standing muscle relaxants remain in their relevant chapter. Unfortunately, several good photographs of bronchoscopic airway views and airway blocks were omitted from this edition. In the chapter regarding vascular anesthesia there is a more thorough discussion of cardiac evaluation and

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management than in the preceding editions. In the orthopedic chapter, an allusion is made to multimodal analgesia, but no references are supplied, presumably reflecting the recent questions raised around this issue. There are many new and useful illustrations in the chapter on transplant anesthesia; however, the postanesthesia recovery chapter has had information about cardiovascular complications and control of postoperative nausea and vomiting truncated. In the chapter on acute pain, examples of orders for patient-controlled analgesia and epidural infusions are also removed.

A noticeable improvement throughout this 6th edition is the use of coloured diagrams and photographs, creating a more appealing and often more understandable presentation. Unfortunately, the ink was smudged on a rare table in my copy, and I had difficulty reading the content.

Aids to assimilate the textbook's information are available separately in a handbook that includes a summary of key information and diagrams from each chapter and a question/answer book that includes explanations for the answers and references to the text. This publication, along with other textbooks, has been available in electronic format

(Lippincott Interactive Anesthesia Library, LIAL) since the 3rd edition, either in CD-ROM format or most recently by on-line subscription. At this point, it is unclear whether the LIAL will continue. With the current 6th edition, access to an on-line website is provided that gives a complete and searchable reproduction of the text and figures as well as a series of self-test questions. There is also an innovative series of podcasts consisting of approximately 15-minute audio-visual chapter summaries that can be downloaded onto a computer or mobile device, such as a Blackberry® or iPod/iPhone®. Four podcasts are currently available, although more will undoubtedly appear in due course.

In summary, the textbook's updating is as one might expect; however, the improved presentation with regard to illustrations and use of podcasting are significant advances. Although the text is detailed enough for a senior trainee or practitioner, thanks to the text's clarity and content, a novice should easily grasp the information. Undoubtedly, many anesthesiologists and medical departments will want this book—it certainly belongs in all teaching department libraries. I highly recommend "Clinical Anesthesia", 6th edition, particularly as a first-time purchase.