
Book Review

Preparing for the Anesthesia Orals: Board Stiff.

Gallagher CJ, Lubarsky DA. Butterworths, Toronto, 1989.

As the authors concede, this is not an academic treatise on clinical anaesthesia. Nevertheless, it serves an important function. Written by two junior faculty members from Duke University, this large format guide and workbook provides an orientation for candidates to the American Board of Anesthesiology oral examinations. The first sections of the book identify goals of the examination, objectives and tactics of the examiners, and techniques of answering common, yet frequently perplexing, clinical questions. While the style is light and amusing, the content is clear and precise, and the message is certain. In demonstrating good answering strategies, the authors attend to four themes: judgment, application of knowledge, adaptability, and clarity. In the later workbook section of the text, candidates can develop their own answers and then judge the merits of their responses. If better understanding of the examination process can improve performance, then this book serves a unique and beneficial function. While American in outlook, this book contains sound principles which should benefit candidates of the Royal College oral examinations. Examiners might also find this book a cogent reminder of the fears and confusion felt by the candidates. The greatest benefit of this book may be to allay the anxiety demonstrated by many candidates attending the oral examinations. In summary, I would recommend this book for all academic department libraries and to all candidates approaching their oral examinations. For those who procrastinate, it would make excellent reading on the flight to the exams.

C.J. Eagle MD FRCP
Calgary, Alberta