

BOOK REVIEWS

LOW FLOW AND CLOSED SYSTEM ANESTHESIA. J. ANTONIO ALDRETE, HARRY J. LOWE AND ROBERT W. VIRTUE. New York, Grune & Stratton Inc., 1979. Price \$19.50.

THIS WELL BOUND, hardcover volume comprises a collection of papers on a variety of subjects related to and theoretically applicable to the two title subjects.

Most of the involved mathematical considerations are beyond the interest of the great majority of practising clinical anaesthetists, although certainly not beyond their comprehension or capabilities. Some chapters are controversial and tend to detract from the main thrust of the editors and contributors.

The intrusion of some relatively unrelated material such as safe methods of using high flows and the medicolegal sequelae of improper administration of anaesthetics do not add to the usefulness of this presentation.

JAIN M. MACKAY

MUSCLE RELAXANTS. STANLEY A. FELDMAN. Toronto, W.B. Saunders Co. Canada Ltd., 2nd Edition, 1979. Price: \$16.80.

SINCE THIS TEXTBOOK first appeared five years ago the amount of new information published on neuromuscular conduction and muscle relaxants has increased tremendously. The author, a research clinician and outstanding investigator in the field, has revised the original edition almost completely in an attempt to produce an easily read and understood book which both encompasses new data and correlates it with older observations. An intriguing description of the history of the discovery of curare and its emergence as a clinical tool is followed by some seventeen chapters describing the physiology of the neuromuscular junction, the pharmacology of the muscle relaxant drugs and the parameters which effect the use of these agents in everyday practice.

Appreciating the extensive references presented, one can sympathize with the problem of reducing such an enormous amount of data into

an easily digestible volume. The latter more clinically oriented portion of this book is concise and logically presented, with a particularly good section on ancillary drugs affecting neuromuscular block. The initial section, however, is much less supple in the reading. Here the author tends to oversimplify basic concepts and, in some areas, to over-emphasize the description of biochemical laboratory techniques and errors. This would likely be slightly confusing to students who were new to the field, although it is definitely of interest to those at an advance level. The graphic illustrations are a helpful inclusion, but the small-scale photographic figures have reproduced poorly and add little clarity to the text.

This book will continue as one of the definitive works on the subject and is recommended both as a reference text for practitioners and basic reading for residents.

S.E. JELENICH

PHARMACOLOGY OF GANGLIONIC TRANSMISSION. Vol. 53, Handbook of Experimental Pharmacology ed. D.A. KHARKEVICH. Berlin/Heidelberg/New York, Springer-Verlag, 1980.

THIS RECENT ADDITION to the handbook series, which was edited at the First Medical Institute, Moscow and has at least one-third of its contributors from the U.S.S.R., reflects a long-standing interest of Russian pharmacologists and clinicians in the subject of ganglionic transmission, the popularity of which has declined and fluctuated over the years.

The fifteen chapters of the volume, by seventeen authors, are extremely well organized and give a balanced presentation of important aspects of pure and applied research in the field. Introductory sections on morphology, physiology and metabolism are followed by a group of others on the site and mechanism of action of ganglion blocking agents, as well as their structure-activity relationship, absorption and distribution, and actions on the cardiovascular and gastro-intestinal systems. Subsequent chapters deal with nicotinic and non-nicotinic stimulating agents; ganglionic activity of cardiovascular drugs; central and peripheral neurotropic drugs; and finally the use

of ganglion blockade in Internal Medicine and Anaesthesiology. Of particular value for anyone beginning research in this area is a thorough and critical assessment by Gyermek of "Methods for the Examination of Ganglion-blocking Activity". For those interested in the action and mechanism of action of anaesthetics, the volatile agents, barbiturates, other depressants and neuroleptics are included along with psychoactive drugs in the section on CNS acting agents. Unfortunately, the final chapter on ganglion blockade in Anaesthesiology contrasts markedly with the rest of the book, and appears to be misplaced in context. It is limited almost exclusively to a description of clinical usage, which makes no mention of more recent techniques of controlled hypotension. There is little reference to either clinical or laboratory experimental studies, the exception being a few pages on extracorporeal circulation; and an unusually small number of references is provided, the most recent being from 1974.

Although there appears to have been considerable lag between the preparation of manuscripts and publication, this book serves its function well by furnishing a previously much-needed extensive discussion and reference source for both experienced and new investigators in the field. Even though much of the description relates to basic science, the many summaries and clinical orientation and implications of several parts (notably chapters 6-8, 11, and 13-15) provide a balance and ensure both appeal and usefulness for a variety of specialized readers.

M.E. MORRIS

DISASTER MEDICINE, Vol. 1. Types and Events of Disasters. Organization in Various Disaster Situations. Editors: R. FREY AND P. SAFAR. Pp. 355, figs. 97, soft cover. Berlin-Heidelberg-New York. Springer-Verlag, 1980. ISBN 0-387-09043-6. Price: U.S. \$46.50.

THIS BOOK, the first in a new Series on "Disaster Medicine", represents Part I of the Proceedings of the International Congress on Disaster Medicine, held in Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany in 1977. One hundred and five authors are listed as responsible for 101 contributions to this very comprehensive volume. Its scope is wide and it is not possible to give more than a broad outline of its contents by citing the headings of the five sections comprising it. They are: "Types, Events and Definition of Disasters"; "Local, Regional and National Organization in Various Disaster Situations", and "Reports on Workshops on Global, Local/Regional and Definite Care in Disaster Situations". Because of the mass of information relating to all types of disasters in peace and in war, nuclear and conventional, this book is a must for all who are potentially involved in organizing or rendering care in disaster situations, whatever their likely role, and it should be available to all E.M.O. Officers and local leaders as a reference manual. One looks forward to Part 2 of the reports from the Congress which is scheduled to deal with "Resuscitation and Life Support" and "Relief of Pain and Suffering".

GORDON M. WYANT

BOOKS RECEIVED

PREPARATION FOR ANAESTHESIA. A.J. STEVENS. Tunbridge Wells, Pitman Medical Ltd., 1980. Price: \$22.50.

SEDATION LOCAL AND GENERAL ANAESTHESIA IN DENTISTRY. N.B. JORGENSEN AND J. HAYDEN, JR. Toronto, The Macmillan Co. of Canada, 3rd edition, 1980. Price \$34.50.

EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSES TO ANESTHESIA AND SURGERY. FRANK GUERRA AND J. ANTONIO ALDRETE. New York, Grune & Stratton Inc., 1980. Price: U.S. \$23.50.

SYSTOLIC TIME INTERVALS. W.F. LIST, J.S. GRAVENSTEIN AND D.H. SPODICK. New York, Springer-Verlag Inc., 1980. Price: U.S. \$31.90.