Book Reviews

ECG Essentials: A Pocket Reference for Systematic Interpretation

Kent R. Murphy, Jeffrey J. Pelton. Quintessence Publishing Co. Inc., Chicago, 1991. pp. 176. \$24.00 U.S. ISBN 0-86715-222-2

In the preface of this small spiral-bound manual this statement of the primary aim of the text is found: "To present a *method* for ECG interpretation – one that is simple, reproducible and rapidly applicable." The authors, who are identified only by name, without mention of academic affiliation or geographic location, have succeeded in at least the first of these aims.

The book is organized into eight short chapters, each completed by a selection of review questions. The first chapter introduces the concept of the electrocardiogram (ECG), discusses the 12-leads of the standard tracing, the correlation of the physiological and electrical (ECG) events and the anatomy of the conduction system. Chapters 2 and 3 discuss a basic approach in evaluating the rate, rhythm, intervals and waveforms of any ECG tracing. In the next chapter, pathology related to rhythm, interval and waveform is introduced. Evaluating the axis is the topic of Chapter 5. Cardiac anatomy abnormalities, such as atrial enlargement and ventricular hypertrophy, are discussed in Chapter 6. Screening for ischaemia and infarction is introduced in Chapter 7, while the final chapter contains brief descriptions of several "special topics" such as pericarditis, pulmonary embolism and pacemakers. After a section containing the answers to all review questions in the text, a series of appendices is presented which includes much important, though basic, information: ACLS protocols, reprinted from the American Heart Association Textbook of Advanced Cardiac Life Support, techniques for central venous access and pericardiocentesis, therapeutic drug levels, descriptions of antiarrhythmic drugs, infusion rates of cardiovascular agents, useful cardiac formulae and "key" normal laboratory values. Much of this latter information is reprinted from Moreno-Cabral C, Mitchell SR, Miller CP: *Manual of Postoperative Management in Adult Cardiac Surgery* (Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins Co., 1988).

All the information in the body of the manual is extremely basic, appropriate for those being exposed to the intricacies of ECG interpretation for the first time. Students of medicine, nursing and allied fields seem the natural audience for this book. The many clear illustra-

tions, examples of ECG recordings and summaries of important information in special "Quick Diagnosis" boxes all reinforce this impression. There are no special features, however, that would appeal directly to the interests of training or practising anaesthetists. The discussion of lead systems, for example, completely ignores alternatives that are used daily in the O.R. Such deficits, the absence of detail in the discussions of all topics, especially rhythm abnormalities and ischaemia detection, and the availability of other similarly packaged but more sophisticated manuals, make this particular text a poor choice for individual anaesthetists and departmental libraries.

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Baillière's International Practice and Research. Intensive Care: Developments and Controversies

G.J. Dobb (Guest Editor). Baillière Tindall, London, 1990. pp. 613. £22.50/\$37.00. ISBN 0-7020-1465-6

The September 1990 issue of this series is an update of current knowledge in selected areas of critical care. This multi-authored text is well-written and will be useful to anaesthetists who are directly involved in critical care as well as those who encounter critically ill patients in the operating room.

Basic principles are summarized and most chapters provide practical suggestions for clinical problems. Particularly relevant is the chapter on "Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics in the critically ill." Concepts such as heart failure in septic states, renal replacement therapy and critical oxygen delivery are outlined as are controversies such as the use of pulmonary artery catheters. Especially valuable is the discussion of new weaning techniques and desirable features of modern mechanical ventilators. Nosocomial pulmonary infections are reviewed, outlining concepts of host resistance and pathogenesis which should be understood by anaesthetists.

In organizing this volume, Dr. Dobb has included areas of critical care that are often ignored in similar volumes, such as the management of multiple organ donors and enteral nutrition. This volume provides the reader with a diverse update in areas where advances have been made.

This issue does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview. I recommend it highly for experienced critical care fellows and residents as well as practitioners as a summary of current knowledge on these selected topics.

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Trauma: Anesthesia and Intensive Care

Levon M. Capan, Sanford M. Miller, Herman Turndorf (Eds.). J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1991. pp 928. \$125.00 U.S. ISBN 0-397-50618-X.

Trauma is of increasing importance in anaesthesia practice as society becomes more complex and possibly more violent. However, there are few trauma texts that are specifically directed to the needs of the anaesthetist. This book, which contains the combined contributions of over thirty authors from anaesthesia, surgery and intensive care, covers a wide range of clinical and organizational topics relating to the management of trauma patients.

The book is broadly divided into the emergency, anaesthetic, and intensive care management of patients. Its best sections are those relating to the emergency and intraoperative care of patients with excellent chapters on airway and anaesthetic management with very informative chapters on the pathophysiology of shock, oxygen transport and utilization, and resuscitation.

However, the section discussing the complications of trauma is less well done. It adds little to the general topic and is the section that passes for intensive care management. The main reason for this section was to discuss pain management and this could have been done elsewhere. Nevertheless, this is an excellent book for anaesthetists and emergency physicians, and one is loath to criticize any part of it. I would highly recommend this book to all physicians providing care to the trauma patient, whether they are anaesthetists, emergency physicians, or surgeons. Also, the general anaesthetist will find a great deal of useful information for day-to-day practice in this superb book.

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Endotoxin from Pathophysiology to Therapeutic Approaches

J.-D. Baumgartner, T. Calandra, J. Carlet (Eds.). Flammarion Médecine-Sciences, Paris, 1990. pp. 129. 90 FF. ISBN 2-257-10656-3

In October 1989, a scientific symposium regarding Endotoxin was held. This book is a nine-chapter compendium of the manuscripts that were presented at this meeting and reviews the current understanding of various endotoxin topics which include: chemical structure and biological activity, mechanism of host-response, endogenous anti-endotoxin mechanisms, predicting sepsis utilizing endotoxin assays, tumour necrosis factor, cytokines and septic shock, experimental immunotherapy with anti-endotoxin antibodies, treatment of gram-negative septicemia with anti-tissue necrosis factor and prevention of endotoxin toxicity by Lipid A derivatives.

Although there are multiple authors (over 50 contributors) all chapters are organized in a similar fashion with an introduction, main text and end with a summary. This results in some overlap of discussion regarding gram-negative sepsis but overall the text is well written and despite the complex nature of the topic, permits easy and very interesting reading.

This text would benefit any reader who is interested in endotoxin either from a clinical or research point of view. Both clinical and laboratory experimental data is contained in this manuscript. For a current review of endotoxin, I highly recommend this text.

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