Book reviews

Anesthesiology: today and tomorrow

T.H. Stanley, W.C. Petty (eds.) Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht, NL. 1984. \$43.50 (us)

This book is a collection of lectures by several speakers given at the annual Utah Postgraduate Course in Anesthesiology held early in 1984. The theme of this course is recent advances and future trends in anaesthesia and covers a wide range of topics. These include acute care medicine (metabolic functions of the lung, ARDS, CPR), newer intravenous agents (narcotics, serotonin inhibitors, relaxants), pain theory and monitoring (transesophageal 2-D electrocardiography, tissue spectroscopy). There also are adequate but standard reviews of aspects of obstetrical anaesthesia, neurosurgical anaesthesia and regional blockade. Of particular interest is the essay "Choice of Agent" by Dr. W.K. Hamilton, which addresses the rationale, or lack thereof, with which anaesthesia has assigned or prohibited its drugs for specific uses. In general, the chapters are well-referenced with recent and appropriate citations.

While some of the material presented may be controversial and some of the agents and techniques mentioned may be far in the clinical future, this collection of lectures gives an interesting look at other viewpoints for practice and a glimpse at some current lines of new thinking and research. The 1984 Utah Postgraduate Course in Anesthesiology appears to have been an entertaining conference.

In summary, this book provides an overview of recent advances in some areas of anaesthesia and a glimpse into the possible future. It makes interesting reading and I would recommend a copy for every departmental library.

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Textbook of pain

Patrick D. Wall, Ronald Melzack (Eds.) Churchill Livingstone, 1984, 866 pages. (Academic Press Canada, Don Mills). \$147

This is a well-written and timely contribution by individuals who have added significantly to our understanding of pain. The recent growth in the volume of information about pain prompted the consolidation of present knowledge into a textbook. *The textbook of pain* has admirably achieved the goal.

At first glance the reader may be overwhelmed by the size and the number of topics covered in this single volume. However, on delving further into the book, one finds it is very well organized and the majority of topics, which are of current interest, are well covered.

The theme of the text is in accord with the present-day multi-disciplinary approach to pain, with contributions being made by a host of multinational authors from numerous medical specialities. The result is a good textbook which does not present a restricted view based on region or specialty bias.

As with many multi-authored texts the quality of the individual contributions varies; however, the editing has produced a reasonable overall standard. The majority of contributions are well referenced to current articles, although some delay between the writing and publication of the text is evident.

The text is divided into three main sections. The first deals with the basic physiology and pathophysiology of pain, progressing in a logical fashion from the peripheral to the central nervous system. The in-depth description of the basic aspects of pain may be overwhelming to some, but serves to provide a sound foundation for future work. The section concludes appropriately with a consideration of methodology and ethics in pain investigation.

The second section deals with most of the common diseases in which pain is a predominant symptom. Each chapter in this section is concerned with a specific clinical disorder, offering a practical

and realistic approach to the diagnosis and management of pain.

The final section is concerned with the treatment of pain. The many treatment modalities which are currently available are reviewed. The section provides a useful clinical guide for assessing the value of specific forms of pain therapy.

In conclusion, this book is a major step forward in pain management and sets the standard for future publications in the area. The textbook should prove a valuable reference acquisition for individuals or departments involved in pain management, irrespective of speciality affiliation.

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Anaesthetics, resuscitation and intensive care

Donald Campbell, Alastair A. Spence. Churchill Livingstone, 6th Edition, 1985 (Academic Press Canada, Don Mills) \$20

Almost 20 years have passed since the first edition of this book appeared. The sixth edition has been largely rewritten. The authors attempt to clarify for the medical student, the hospital resident, and the beginner in the specialty, the underlying and unchanging principles of good and safe practice within the operating room and the intensive care unit. These aims are admirable, and the task formidable, for such a small soft-covered handbook.

In the reviewer's opinion, the authors have failed to accomplish their aims. Many of the drugs are no longer used, or are not available in Canada; namely, cyclopropane, trilene, methoxyflurane, ether, chloroform, propanidid. There is a lack of emphasis on preoperative assessment. Monitoring, both invasive and non-invasive, appears to be very casual. For example, page 132, "... monitoring of the ECG or the peripheral pulse (by plethysmography), or both, are desirable and on occasion essential." Considerable stress is placed on the empty stomach prior to anaesthesia. Sellick's manoeuvre is described, but the description of a rapid sequence induction appears to have been overlooked. Blood component therapy does not appear

to be available, and the approach to obstetrical analgesia would appear to be quite different in the United Kingdom than in North America. In addition, this small volume attempts to cover regional anaesthesia, analgesia, the anaesthetist as a consultant, and his role in an intensive care or respiratory unit.

The few diagrams and tables that have been selected are most helpful to the reader. The text is easy to read and the book is well produced. Unfortunately, in this reviewer's opinion, this book cannot be recommended to North American medical students and residents in Anaesthesia.

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Les benzodiazépines en anesthésie-réanimation

C. Conseiller, M.T. Cousin, J.M. Desmonts, P. Duvaldestin, T. Gaveau, A. Lienhart, J. Montagne, Ph. Scherpereel, P. Viars. C.H.U. Pitié Salpêtrière, Paris

Ce recueil de 120 pages regroupe les conférences données au C.H.U. Pitié Salpêtrière à Paris en 1983-4. Il comporte une partie sur les sciences fondamentales et l'autre sur l'utilisation clinique.

La première partie traite de la théorie des récepteurs aux benzodiazépines, de la pharmacologie expérimentale et des méthodes d'études cliniques (qui présentent moins d'intérêt pour l'anesthésiste) et de la cinétique du médicament permettant dans la pratique un choix plus rationnel dans les indications.

Dans la deuxième partie, les effets amnésiants, myorelaxants et anti-convulsants sont rapidement étudiés ainsi que les interactions et le sevrage du médicament, mais ces chapitres sont faits dans l'optique d'une utilisation chronique du produit.

Les effets circulatoires et respiratoires qui nous intéressent plus particulièrement sont traités de façon claire et analytique. Concernant son utilisation en peropératoire, on pourra rester surpris de voir les benzodiazépines proposées en obstétrique et en chirurgie ambulatoire chez l'enfant.

Ce livre présente donc des communications d'intérêt très inégal, manque de concision et de

précisions anesthésiques. On pourra regretter le peu de place laissé au midazolam dans cette étude.

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Acute pain

G. Smith, B.G. Covino. Butterworth Publishers, Stoneham MA. 1985. \$59.95 (us)

This book is concise, informative, well referenced and presented in an orderly non-anecdotal, scientific manner. It updates the present understanding of the physiology and pharmacology of acute pain and gives practical information on ways to treat it.

It is a very welcome addition to the pain literature and the information provided is sufficiently practical, that, in my opinion it should be read by every under- and postgraduate medical student.

The chapter on pain assessment, from a practical point of view, leaves the reader in as much quandary as to the relevance of animal studies to the clinical state, and has omitted the cardinal clinical findings in psychogenic pain states – which are as prevalent in acute pain as they are in chronic pain patients.

Acute pain in the head and neck, and nerve blocks in this area, are also notably omitted. Perhaps these omissions could be included in the next edition.

Chapter 3 – on the pharmacology of analgesia is exceedingly well presented and precisely covers the practical hazards and problems encountered in every day practice.

I strongly recommend that this book be read by anaesthetists, family doctors, oncologists and surgeons.

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La pathologie respiratoire en anesthésie-réanimation

C.H.U. Pitié, Salpêtrière, Paris, 1984

"Respiratory patho-physiology in anaesthesia and intensive care" is the soft-cover collection of 27 unedited presentations, largely in French, given during the Continuing Medical Education sessions organized by Professor P. Viars and his staff. The first twelve deal with pre- and intraoperative aspects of the care of chest trauma, COPD, obesity, scoliosis, asthma, etc. One of these includes the results of a national survey of "misadventures." The second four deal with non-respiratory lung function (heat and moisture exchange, defense mechanisms, gas uptake and metabolic function). The last section deals with postoperative dysfunction, complications and their management.

The style of most chapters is very didactic, as befits the purpose of the publication. There is surprisingly little overlap for an unedited book. Most chapters have an extensive bibliography, including references from English and French journals. This aspect is a plus because it provides the interested reader with a ready source of information.

The contents of the presentations give a very clear idea of the similarities and differences between North American and French practice. The book would be particularly useful for hospital or university departments whose staff are mainly French speaking and as a reference source for other departments.

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