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## Book Reviews

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### **The ICU Book, 2nd ed.**

*Paul L. Marino.* Williams & Wilkins, 1998. 928 pages. \$70.32 (US) ISBN 0683-05565-8

The stated goals of this single authored text by Paul L. Marino is to provide a "..... generic text for all (adult) intensive care units, regardless of the specialty ownership of any ICU." with emphasis on the basic fundamentals of Critical Care. The text is organized into sections covering many broad topics ranging from basic sciences of cardiopulmonary function to common clinical problems in Critical Care such as differential diagnosis and management of acid-base and electrolyte disorders.

For the purposes of this review, the text was distributed over one week to junior residents in a multidisciplinary tertiary care Intensive Care Unit. Positive feedback from the house staff included organization, ease of reading, and the ability of the text to provide a quick overview of an unfamiliar topic in Critical Care. The chapters on electrolyte problems, nutrition and drug overdose were thought to be useful by the house staff and the appendices at the end of the text provided a good quick reference of conversion tables, normal blood values, and common scoring systems.

The primary weakness of this text is related to its single authorship. Controversial "fundamental" opinions are expressed without acknowledging their controversy. A reasonable strategy to manage hypoxemia with manipulation of ventilator modes and mean airway pressure to improve oxygenation is absent. Controversial management strategies emphasizing high oxygen delivery with inotrope manipulation are condoned without reference to clinical trials questioning the safety of this practice.

A major oversight in the text is the absence of a dedicated chapter on basic airway management. Indications for intubation are stated in the text as "thinking of it" to avoid complications of late intubation. The primary airway management strategy for replacement of a displaced tracheostomy tube utilizing a 12 French suction catheter as a stylet is clearly inadequate. More detailed discussion, particularly in a fundamental text of this nature, regarding basic airway management is needed.

The broad extent and complexity of problems in Critical Care are a daily challenge for even the best

trained and competent Intensivist. Single authorship of a fundamental text of this scope is obviously a large task. Multidisciplinary authorship of the well organized content of this text could potentially make *The ICU Book* a worthwhile investment for all disciplines in Critical Care.

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**Acute Paediatric Pain Management. A Practical Guide**  
*N.S. Morton* (Ed.). W.B. Saunders, 1998. 284 pages.  
\$38.95. ISBN 0-7020-2219-5

This is a pocket sized, 284 page, paper back text intended to complement an adult oriented guide, *Acute Pain Management - A Practical Guide*. It is available in Canada for just under \$40.00. There are seven authors, six of whom practise in either Edinburgh or Glasgow. Accordingly, the manual describes a regional practice. All contributors are anesthesiology trained with the exception of the clinical nurse specialist in Pain Relief.

The book is divided into nine Chapters including one on sedation. Chapter 2 is a very good concise summary of the development of fetal and neonatal pain perception. This manual is unique as it contains a chapter providing a "cookbook" approach to the management of postoperative pain and also the side-effects of pain management in specific pediatric clinical scenarios. This chapter will be very useful to trainees and non-specialists as the recommendations consider developmental issues and emphasize a multimodal pre-emptive approach.

An annoying feature is the inconsistent method of referencing material. Some chapters list citations and others contain references for further reading. As many of these references are applicable to multiple chapters, they are repeated. I would have preferred actual references to allow the reader to further examine topics of interest. For example, I was fascinated to read that clonidine may have a role in the management of local anesthetic toxicity but the statement is un-referenced.

Another difficulty with "Pain Management Manuals" is incorporating a concise "regional anesthesia and block" book within them. Also, descriptions of the various blocks would have been much more informative if they were accompanied by a graphic. This

book would serve as valuable introductory reading to a trainee unfamiliar with pediatric management or to an established clinician wishing to develop a pediatric pain management service.

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### **Anesthesiology Pocket Guide**

Thomas N. Pajewski. Lippincott-Raven Publishers, 1997. 465 pages. \$32.95 (US) ISSN 0-7817-0141-4

This 450 page pocket book has been published to fill its self-described niche of a portable compilation of scattered facts and tables of relevance to anesthesia. The book summarizes preoperative assessment considerations, the pharmacology of anesthetic agents, and the physiology of the major systems. It also has surprising detail presented in useful tables on regional, pediatric and obstetrical anesthesia. Its strengths are its readability, portability and the successful presentation of information that is scattered throughout a variety of sources. It lists 108 references that are reasonably current. The weakness is related more to the presentation. The binding is stiff and unlikely to withstand the intended traffic and the rigid spine makes the study of tables a struggle. Perhaps a ring binder format would be more durable and practical.

In summary, the book is a useful reference for those common but hard to find details that are used in practice and in preparation for examinations. It is easily carried by residents that need to refresh their memories and a handy resource for the staff man to use for his clinical teaching sessions. I would recommend this booklet as an addition to both resident and staff libraries.

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### **Handbook of Cardiac Anesthesia and Perioperative Care: A Demystologized Approach**

John D. Wasnick. Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998. 388 pages. \$45.00 (US) ISBN 0-7506-9748-2

This book is intended as a brief refresher for the practicing community anesthesiologist returning to cardiac anesthesia. In the introduction, the author promises to present the basic principles behind the practice, and to destroy the "myths" and "dogmas" that have perpetuated themselves in cardiac anesthesia.

The book is divided in two sections: 1) cardiac anesthesia for the otherwise healthy patient, which is an overview of the preoperative assessment and intra-

operative management of cardiac surgical patients; and 2) cardiac anesthesia for complicated situations (patients with poor LV function, emergency cardiac surgery, valvular surgery, thoracic aortic surgery, etc). There are also chapters on the basics of cardiopulmonary bypass, transesophageal echocardiography and immediate postoperative care.

This paper-back book is meant to be a simple overview of a very broad topic, and that is what it is: a very basic overview of cardiac anesthesia. It can be read easily in a weekend, and it touches upon a wide range of topics, from the Frank Starling curve to ventricular assist devices. It also offers an extensive list of references. Unfortunately, as much as the author wants to focus on principles and not specific practices, the book cannot escape from dogmatic recommendations that are not common practice in all centres. Though it may state that there are many ways to approach a particular problem, the text offers little discussion of the pros and cons of the alternatives. The book also contains numerous photographs, but they are not sufficiently annotated to identify and understand the anatomy, equipment or techniques being demonstrated.

In conclusion, if one is looking for a simple, easy to read, basic introduction to cardiac anesthesia, this book might be of interest. It would be of limited benefit for physicians with previous experience in the "pump" room.

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