

BOOK REVIEWS

CARE OF THE CRITICALLY ILL CHILD. By R.S. JONES AND J.B. OWEN-THOMAS. Toronto, The Macmillan Company of Canada, Limited, 1972. Price \$21.75.

THIS RECENT BOOK is a useful attempt to provide a complete review of the management of any critically ill child. It contains eleven chapters with seven appendices and in 307 pages deals with intensive care of newborns, neonates and children. Two obvious criticisms can be made. Firstly, the book is much too small to deal with all aspects of paediatric intensive care. Secondly, the chapters vary remarkably in the amount of data provided and the degree of explanatory detail.

Nevertheless, the chapters dealing with mechanisms of disease pathology and physiology, management of the newborn, neonate, and nursing care, are extremely valuable and are the results of extensive knowledge and experience. Also, detailed appendices provide a wealth of readily available data and are worth special mention. These two features alone justify the purchase of this text as a useful reference for any paediatric unit.

However, in an attempt to be all-inclusive, some of the chapters deal with topics in a most superficial manner with unsupported information and minimal references. These chapters would be greatly improved by a more detailed expansion.

In summary, this book can be highly recommended despite its qualitative variations from chapter to chapter. It provides an excellent reference for the management of critically ill children, suitable for experienced personnel, as well as physicians and nurses in training.

A.W.C.

THE ANESTHESIOLOGISTS HANDBOOK. By DONALD G. CATRON, M.D. Baltimore, University Park Press, 1972.

THE AUTHOR has an admirable idea, to produce a convenient handbook for the busy "clinical practitioner and students of anaesthesia". Unfortunately this author has failed in his attempt to produce such a handy volume. There is an unevenness in the physiology and pharmacology presentation along with gross inaccuracies; e.g. cautious use of barbiturates in porphyria, page 48 and jugular venous waves, page 121. In many cases the briefly described drugs would appear to have no contraindications, as none are listed. Accompanying these inaccuracies, there are a number of spelling errors, e.g. hypercalemia instead of hyperkalemia, page 66.

In his attempt to achieve brevity, accuracy has been forfeited.

The reviewer feels the author has failed to obtain his objective and cannot recommend this volume.

R.L.M.

LEHR BUCH DER ANAESTHESIOLOGIE (Textbook of Anaesthesiology). Edited by R. FREY, W. HÜGIN, O. MAYRHOFER, Springer Verlag Berlin Heidelberg - New York, 2nd Edition, 1971, pp. 1038.

"HARDLY ANOTHER SPECIALTY in Clinical Medicine has seen in the past 15 years such an enormous development and expansion." This statement in the preface to this 2nd edition of a German textbook of Anaesthesiology is underlined by the increase in size and thickness compared to the first edition by the same authors in 1955. Anaesthesia as a specialty has grown and matured since its beginning in the 1950s and the list of contributors has risen from 24 to 77 anaesthetists teaching and practicing in Germany (East and West), Austria and Switzerland. Most of the original authors are still represented.

In spite of the larger numbers of contributors a fairly good uniformity and continuity has been maintained and the book, well endowed with figures and illustrations is a credit to the German-speaking anaesthetists and represents a good survey of our speciality. Although many monographs have been published in the interval between these two versions on various aspects of Anaesthesia, it appears that an all encompassing textbook still fulfills a need as a reference book for the practicing anaesthetists and a guide for the students. The authors recognize that such a book is dated and that many aspects cannot be treated in detail. Recent subjects under discussion, e.g. malignant hyperthermia have not been recorded and intensive care and long-term respirator care have only been dealt with in basic principles in order to contain the size of this volume.

Apart from a good presentation of the physiological and pharmacological basis of anaesthesiology and its techniques there is a large section on special applications of anaesthesia dealing with the clinical conduct in the various surgical specialties. A further section is devoted to the anaesthetist, his relationship to patients, his training and his legal problems as well as to the organization of a department of anaesthesiology and contains much valuable information.

The book, comparable in scope and size to the British texts by Wylie and Churchill-Davidson and Grey and Nunn, will obviously become a standard for anaesthesia in German-speaking countries. Printing and format are of the usual high quality of German publishers, although one wonders whether its bulk could not have been reduced by the choice of less heavy paper; the first edition seemed more pleasing and much handier with only 200 pages less. The book is highly recommended to German-speaking anaesthetists in this country.

W.E.S.

PARAMEDICAL PATHOLOGY. ALVIN F. GARDNER. Springfield, Charles C. Thomas, 1972. Price \$12.50.

THE CONCEPT of publishing a book on pathology for workers in the allied health field, registered nurses, laboratory, cytology, respiratory and nuclear medicine technologists and many others is a valid one. There is a great need in the educational programmes for various allied health fields for explanations of the fundamental concepts of pathology and a correlation of the pathological changes which occur and the disturbances in function which appear in the patient. It is disappointing that this book does not qualify in any way in meeting this need.

Where attempts have been made to correlate the pathology with the clinical picture, the illustrations used are often of rare and seldom encountered diseases and the clinical aspects are given very scanty treatment.

Many statements in this book are inaccurate and should not have been allowed to proceed to printing. On page 22 and 23 for example, in a paragraph headed "embolism", the statement is made "embolism is rare in organs with double blood supply e.g. liver and lung." On page 25 the subject of shock is dealt with in less than a page and shock is classified as being primary shock, and secondary shock. The pathophysiology is dealt with in seven lines. This section is particularly inadequate.

The whole of bacteriology, including the granulomatous inflammations, acute bacterial virus, rickettsel and fungal infections is handled in a matter of 22 pages in a very cursory section.

The diseases of the respiratory system are described in chapter 12 and encompass twelve pages, subjects such as bronchial asthma and emphysema are linked together in one section consisting of two short paragraphs. This is obviously not adequate for a group such as respiratory technology.

The endocrines are discussed very briefly in a section under diseases of the skeletal system and are referred to only in that they may produce reductions in the amount of calcium in bone.

In summary I feel that this book contributes nothing to the understanding of pathology for the allied health field and it is not recommended.

A.A.S.

LEGAL ASPECTS OF ANAESTHESIA. WM. H.L. DORNETTE, M.D., J.D. Toronto, McGraw Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1972. Price \$27.50.

THIS IS AN EXCELLENT BOOK on the legal aspects of the practice of anaesthesia and although it is exclusively written in relation to American law much of what is said is quite applicable to the Canadian scene. Dr. Dornette has assembled an impressive group of physicians and legal experts who write with great clarity on the subjects which they have been assigned.

It is pointed out in the introduction to this book that anaesthesia now ranks with the specialty of surgery as being among the highest risk groups for legal action in the United States.

The chapters on the lawyer's contingent fee and the explanation of the adversary system which are the chief sources of medical/legal mistrust are both fascinating reading for the physician.

Approximately half of the book is spent in describing for the physician the principles of law which are applied to the physician/patient relationship and the method of handling medical/legal suits. In the second half of the book great care has been taken to explain the ways in which a physician must conduct himself in the practice of anaesthesia and in the face of various medical/legal problems in order to avoid difficulties in the courts.

I would heartily recommend this book to all practicing anaesthetists who wish a better understanding of the legal approach to medical/legal problems and who wish to provide better care for their patients with a lower incidence of threatened legal action. A.A.S.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON MALIGNANT HYPERTHERMIA. R.A. GORDON, BEVERLEY A. BRITT, AND WERNER KALOW, Editors. Springfield, Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1972. Price \$22.50.

MALIGNANT HYPERTHERMIA has been much under discussion during the last few years. It could be classified as an environmental disease condition, related to our modern practice of medicine; An apparently healthy patient with an otherwise unimportant genetic aberration when subjected to certain anaesthetic agents, responds with very rapid rise in body temperature and dies within a few hours unless this abnormal response is recognized early and treated vigorously.

The Departments of Anaesthesia and Pharmacology of the University of Toronto deserve much credit for the recognition and investigation of this condition and for the discovery of its hereditary nature, the biochemical mechanism involved and possible means of treatment and prevention. On their initiative an International Symposium was organized in May 1971 to bring together interested workers to exchange their experience and research findings and to bring together the existing knowledge about malignant hyperthermia.

This book collects the papers and discussions of this Symposium, given by seventy clinicians and scientists, who present on 473 pages their particular expertise focused on a fortunately rare condition, of which about one hundred cases were known at that time. One is not only impressed by the effort of work concentrated on a condition, which the average anaesthetist, on statistical grounds, may have a chance to encounter once in a life-time, but more so about the amount of concrete and practical information obtained during a short space of seven years. During this time not only a fairly clear picture of the condition and its symptomatology emerged, but its hereditary nature was clearly established and a breed of pigs discovered with the same affliction. The investigation could thus move from chance observations to the laboratory and the triggering agents clearly established, the biochemical aspects of the temperature rise further studied and the effectiveness of treatment evaluated. However, it was a chance observation which led to discovery of the beneficial effect of Procaine in the treatment. These aspects have changed

the outlook for the practicing anaesthetist who is no longer watching helplessly a metabolic catastrophe but can recognize malignant hyperthermia, treat it with a fair hope of success and contribute to its prevention. In addition this discovery and its investigation opens up new aspects related to the production of body heat and the metabolic process involved and their association with certain myopathies and provides a possible tool for the discovery of patients who might be afflicted with this condition – the level of creatine phosphokinase – which may play a role in the prevention of malignant hyperthermia.

The papers of the symposium are presented in 7 sections under the following headings: Clinical features of malignant hyperthermia in human patients, hereditary aspects of malignant hyperthermia, related basic science problems, malignant hyperthermia in pigs, co-existing biochemical and muscle abnormalities, investigation of the aetiology and the treatment of malignant hyperthermia. The Editors are to be congratulated on their organization of individual papers into a book, bringing to each section background knowledge as well as observations and studies related to malignant hyperthermia.

Undoubtedly this book will be the standard reference to further work in malignant hyperthermia and a welcome source to researchers in the field of muscular biology. Whether it will serve the education of the practicing anaesthetist is questionable; the Editors consider this one of the purposes of this Symposium. The practicing anaesthetist would probably be better served with a short concise monograph. However, this book should be a source of stimulation to the academically oriented anaesthetist.

This Reviewer cannot resist to observe that this volume owes much to the pig and has deservedly placed a likeness of this under-rated animal on the dust cover. W.E.S.