



## Anesthesia for Otolaryngologic Surgery

**Basem Abdelmalak, D. John Doyle.** Cambridge University Press, 2013, 365 pages.  
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In this book's preface, the reader is informed about the lack of literature on anesthesia for otolaryngologic surgery. In fact, in most textbooks, only one chapter is ordinarily dedicated to this topic, and books on airway management don't necessarily address particularities of ear, nose, and throat (ENT) surgery that are unrelated to airway management strategies. Hence, this addition to the body of anesthesia literature is much welcomed.

The book, which is available in both hardback and eBook format, consists of 33 chapters, four to 24 pages each, that are organized into five sections: *Anesthesia for nasal, sinus and pituitary surgery*; *Anesthesia for head and neck surgery*; *Anesthesia for laryngotracheal surgery*; *Anesthesia for bronchoscopic surgery*; *Anesthesia for pediatric ENT surgery*. There are good-quality colour images throughout the book, and the chapters are systematically organized for easy reading. Also, the preambles for the chapters are not repetitive, as often happens in books with multiple authors. Key features include a summary and a list of clinical pearls at the end of each chapter, and most chapters also include a case study. These add-ons are helpful learning tools.

Contributions from both anesthesiologists and surgeons add strength to this book. This is a constructive approach in consonance with the importance of interprofessional communication in this area and a view that is reinforced throughout the book, particularly because of the "shared airway" issue.

Some advice is very practical, such as the operating room setup, while others have a somewhat limited use, e.g.,

the case of *Anesthesia for face transplantation*. Nevertheless, despite the rarity of this event, it makes for interesting reading. In addition, considering the similarities with reconstructive flap surgery, its applicability can be extrapolated. The issue of the prevention of airway fire is discussed in more detail than in other books, and I particularly welcomed the discussion on the use of heliox for the management of stridor, a technique that I can candidly express is not widely used. The discussion on the use of *Preoperative endoscopic airway examination* is also interesting, notably the differences between the examination performed by the ENT surgeon and that performed by the anesthesiologist.

The book is not without flaws. The editors expressed their intent to provide an overview of some of the book's topics in the *Introduction* and later to cover these topics in more detail. They call this a "macro/micro approach". Although a valid strategy, in the case of *Anesthesia for ENT emergencies*, it became an entire chapter of questionable usefulness. In this case, the strategy provides very little information besides the message that the topic will be covered later in the book. There are several instances in the book where the reader is left wondering if a particular statement is simply the authors' opinion or if there is evidence to support it. For example, in a discussion on the management of patients with anterior mediastinal mass, the author describes the use of dexmedetomidine as well as the need for the availability of cardiopulmonary bypass, but no reference is cited. Similarly, no reference is cited to support the statement that George Washington may have died of epiglottitis. More alarming examples, however, are the statements that provide specific numbers but do not cite the source of the information, e.g., the affirmation that 90-95% of acquired subglottic stenosis is a result of endotracheal intubation and

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the recommendation to keep the patient's hematocrit around 25-30% during flap reconstruction. If the information is not clearly available in the literature, a short message, such as "it is this author's opinion", seems appropriate.

Another weakness is the lack of supplemental multimedia material. On *Management of the Difficult and Failed Airway*, Second Edition, by Orlando Hung and Michael F. Murphy (McGraw-Hill Inc., 2011; ISBN 978-0071623469), a DVD is included to demonstrate some of the techniques described in the book. Similar material would enhance the chapter on head and neck anatomy and the chapter on *Otolaryngology instruments 101 for the anesthesiologist*, which is helpful but limited in its ability to deliver some of its message. I found myself searching online for videos and additional images

of unfamiliar instruments. Short videos demonstrating airway nerve blocks could also facilitate learning. In all fairness, in the chapter on *Anesthesia for ENT laser surgery*, the reader is directed to instructional videos online. This strategy offsets the lack of supplemental material.

In my view, no other book discusses the subspecialty of anesthesia for ENT surgery in such detail, although a direct comparison with books focused specifically on airway management would not be appropriate. This book would be useful material for most anesthesia department libraries, but I would not necessarily suggest that trainees make it part of their personal library. Its most usefulness lies with the occasional ENT anesthesiologist.

**Conflicts of interest** None declared.