



Equipment in Anaesthesia and Critical Care: A complete guide for the FRCA

Daniel Aston, Angus Rivers, Asela Dharmadasa. Scion Publishing Limited, 2014, 404 pages. ISBN: 978-1-907904-05-9

D. Ryan Pikaluk, MD

Received: 30 April 2014/Accepted: 8 May 2014/Published online: 28 May 2014
© Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society 2014

Understanding equipment in anesthesia continues to be a daunting task for both in-training and consultant anesthesiologists alike. The authors of this 404-page text attempt to break down this topic in a concise organized fashion which leaves the reader with information that is practical for daily use.

After identifying a deficiency in the current literature, the three authors, all senior registrars in anesthesia and critical care, sought to develop a book that would better prepare candidates to become a Fellow of the Royal College of Anaesthetists (FRCA), the professional body responsible for the specialty of anesthesia throughout the UK. This book is divided into thirteen sections. Twelve sections cover the various types of equipment that may be encountered in the operating room and intensive care unit, and a thirteenth section is comprised entirely of sample FRCA examination questions. Within each of the twelve sections, there is an overall description of the particular type of equipment, followed by a more in-depth exploration into the specifics of each example. Remarkably, the book includes the most common brands of equipment with full-colour pictures and detailed descriptions that properly identify each piece.

Each piece of equipment is reviewed in a consistent pattern. This begins with a general “Overview” of the equipment, followed by the “Uses” for the equipment and a “How it works” subsection that is usually accompanied by a schematic diagram. Next, the “Advantages”, “Disadvantages”, and “Safety” of the equipment are considered. The pattern is modified based on how each

subsection applies to that piece of equipment. Occasionally, practical tips and related information are also included.

The main advantage of this book over other books of this genre is the manner in which the information is provided. The authors are able to break down confusing concepts and equipment design into an explanation that is much easier to understand compared with other such books. Learners generally have difficulty understanding topics such as circuit design and scavenging systems, but these challenging topics become much simpler given the excellent descriptions and schematic diagrams. This book also excels in providing short and concise explanations, making the search for a particular answer much more efficient. Another advantage to the book is that it is remarkably up to date and appears to feature most of the common brands available in today's market. This allows for a more specific explanation of the use and function of each piece of equipment.

The main drawback of this book, however, is evident in its title. This book is geared towards the FRCA candidate, and therefore, the focus is on the UK system. The main impact of this emphasis pertains to the discussion of guidelines and regulations. Most guidelines listed in this book refer to the UK standard, which, in many circumstances, differs significantly from the Canadian (and American) standard. Overall, this may not seem like a significant concern; however, this becomes particularly confusing because the authors' approach is not uniform. In some instances, the authors list only the UK standard. In others, the UK and American standards are listed. Most importantly, the Canadian standard is not listed at all. Unless the reader already possesses knowledge of standards followed in Canada, this discussion becomes confusing. The remaining drawback is the trade-off

D. R. Pikaluk, MD (✉)
Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, University of Saskatchewan,
Regina, SK, Canada
e-mail: drp253@mail.usask.ca

between a book that is concise and one that lacks depth. For example, due to the limited discussion on some of the more complicated pieces of equipment, the reader is required to reference other books for more detail.

In consideration of the book's overall usefulness, it depends on the reader and the situation. For the Canadian equivalent, the FRCPC candidate, the book has a useful role in aiding the understanding of how the various pieces of equipment function. Nevertheless, the concise format occasionally becomes a weakness where more in-depth material is needed. In particular, this book may not provide enough information for junior learners to gain a proper grasp on the topic. Also, caution needs to be exercised when reading the various guidelines described within the text; the *Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society (CAS) Guidelines to the Practice of Anesthesia* or other

applicable regional guidelines should be referenced.¹ For the more experienced anesthesiologist, the book provides a solid review of the pertinent details of the desired equipment and allows the reader to find answers quickly. Overall, the book is a useful and worthwhile resource to own, as its simple concise explanations for difficult topics clearly stand out.

Conflict of interest None declared.

Reference

1. Merchant R, Chartrand D, Dain S, et al. Guidelines to the Practice of Anesthesia - Revised Edition 2014. *Can J Anesth* 2014; 61: 46-71.