Analgesia, Anaesthesia and Pregnancy - A Practical Guide, Fourth Edition

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Vasudha Misra, MBBS, FRCA, FRCPC

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Analgesia, Anaesthesia and Pregnancy - A Practical Guide, Fourth Edition is an approachable, easy-to-read overview of the field it addresses. Three of the authors are anesthesia consultants in the United Kingdom (R.M., M.S., S.Y.), and S.M. is an anesthesia consultant in Australia. The book presents a standard of practice in the United Kingdom. The format of the book remains unchanged from its previous (2013) edition and is a paperback of modest proportions (535 pages). It is divided into four major sections, which in turn are divided into a variable number of short (2–4 pages) chapters (178 in all). Section 1 covers Pre-conception and conception. Section 2, Pregnancy, is subdivided into Procedures in early and mid-pregnancy, Normal pregnancy and delivery, Operative delivery and the third stage, Anaesthetic problems, Problems confined to obstetrics and Problems not confined to obstetrics (i.e., maternal problems). Section 3 covers the Puerperium and afterward (subdivided into The neonate and The mother). Finally, Section 4 discusses organizational issues, such as the organization of the labour ward and standards, guidelines, and protocols for a maternity unit. It also covers obstetrical medico-legal issues.

Despite its relatively small size, the book is remarkably comprehensive in scope and covers a wide range of topics. The chapters are well written and the information is concisely presented. Each chapter typically begins with an introduction to the topic at hand, followed by sections entitled Problems and special considerations, Management options, Key points, and Further reading, the latter including a few important references. The challenges presented by the parturient are discussed from both

anesthetic and obstetrical perspectives. Commonly encountered problems (e.g., aortocaval compression syndrome, “full stomach” considerations) as well as rarer situations (e.g., intrauterine surgery, Jehovah witness demands) are described with enough detail to guide clinical management with an emphasis on a multi-disciplinary approach.

I was particularly struck by the usefulness of Section 3, which reviews neonatal physiology, pharmacology, assessment, and resuscitation – providing vital information for all practicing obstetrical anesthesiologists. The final section of the book has some excellent chapters on practice audit, research, patient consent, documentation, risk management, and post-crisis management – topics that are often missing in larger subspecialty textbooks but are essential to good, safe modern medical practice.

This fourth edition of *Analgesia, Anaesthesia and Pregnancy - A Practical Guide* features new chapters on preoperative assessment, patient-controlled analgesia, malignant hyperthermia, modified early warning scoring, chronic pain after Cesarean delivery, and enhanced recovery after surgery – all subjects that are relevant to perioperative care of obstetric patients. I greatly appreciated that the chapter concerned with the difficult airway included guidelines specific to the parturient, as outlined by the Difficult Airway Society (UK), because these guidelines are specific to the obstetrical population. I also appreciated the material concerned with fetal gas tension measurements and oximetry as well as monitoring maternal electrocardiogram ST changes. To keep the theme current, major recommendations from the National Audit Projects (NAP) from the United Kingdom (NAP 4 and NAP 5) and the recent report of the confidential enquiry

V. Misra, MBBS, FRCA, FRCPC (✉)
University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, Canada
e-mail: misravas@gmail.com

into maternal and child health are all thoughtfully woven into the text and quoted in several chapters.

The overall appeal of *Analgesia, Anaesthesia and Pregnancy* is that it provides practical guidance in the management of issues encountered in birthing units that are often not addressed in subspecialty texts (e.g., inadequate regional anesthesia during labour, backache and breakthrough pain during Cesarean delivery). The chapters provide clinical pearls emphasized in the Key points, and the references are reasonably current in the Further reading section. The book could be improved with the addition of higher quality colored illustrations. Furthermore, although the tables contain valuable information, they could be improved by the incorporation of enhanced graphics and color. Another reservation is that the book reflects the standard practice in the United Kingdom, which might not resonate with some North American practitioners (e.g., prescription and administration of drugs by midwives, differences in the

type and concentrations of local anesthetics used for neuraxial anesthesia and analgesia).

In summary, *Analgesia, Anaesthesia and Pregnancy - A Practical Guide, Fourth Edition* will provide anesthesia trainees (residents/fellows) and experienced obstetrical anesthesiologists relevant, practical advice on a wide range of topics in obstetrical anesthesia. I found it to be a most useful and informative read, and I highly recommend that this text be included in any anesthesia library accessed by those who provide obstetrical anesthesia care.

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