Emergencies in Anaesthesia – Third Edition

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Emergencies in Anaesthesia – Third Edition is a concise compilation of practical approaches to emergency situations encountered in anesthetic practice. This handbook comprises 15 chapters, based conveniently on systems, such as “Cardiovascular” and “Airway”. Each topic is reviewed within two to four pages organized in bullet-point format, including Definition, Presentation, Immediate Management, Subsequent Management, Investigations, Risk Factors, Exclusions, Pediatric Implications, Special Considerations, and Further Reading. This third edition has been upgraded from the second edition (published in 2009) by incorporating new resuscitation and management guidelines. Thus, the book is now an excellent and practical resource for physicians looking for up-to-date information on crisis resource management (CRM). The “Crisis Management and Human Factors” chapter, newly introduced in this edition, emphasizes the important role of non-technical skills in CRM. The chapter details concepts such as situational awareness, leadership, communication, and debriefing. In doing so, it outlines major tasks to be performed prior to, during, and after a critical incident. That said, readers must look elsewhere, including CRM textbooks, to explore the details as to how human factors can be modified or systemically addressed to reduce errors in emergency situations.

The contents and contributing authors of *Emergencies in Anaesthesia* are primarily UK-based. Hence, references are drawn from European entities such as the Resuscitation Council UK, National Institute for Health and Care

Excellence, and Difficult Airway Society, among others. Although there are small differences in medication and dosage guidelines, the overarching management principles for each crisis scenario are the same as would be expected in North America. In fact, as an anesthesiologist trained in Canada, I enjoyed reading this book and learning about the similarities and differences in guideline recommendations across the continents. For example, for the unanticipated difficult airway, the Difficult Airway Society guideline (UK) and the Vortex Approach (Australian) seem more intuitive than the American Society of Anesthesiologists' algorithm for addressing the difficult airway. By learning both the North American and European guidelines, readers can develop an astute understanding of the major themes involved in the treatment for each scenario and thus gain confidence in their CRM skills. Contrarily, this book is less suitable for North American residents studying for qualifying examinations because of minor differences in the intercontinental recommendations. In the future, the authors might consider developing a similar handbook based more on North American guidelines.

Emergencies in Anaesthesia is more likely to serve as a bookshelf reference than a cognitive bedside aid. In contrast, cognitive aids such as the *Operating Room Crisis Checklists* by Ariadne Labs and the *Stanford Anesthesia Cognitive Aid Group Emergency Manual* are visually presented in a way that allows clinicians to follow the directions with ease under stressful circumstances. Although similar information is presented in *Emergencies in Anaesthesia*, it is formatted in a plain print format that makes finding information quickly or under duress more difficult. Compared with earlier books on CRM that provided comprehensive overviews of scenarios encountered by anesthesiologists, the strength of *Emergencies in Anaesthesia – Third Edition* lies in its concise approach. By focusing on the presentation and immediate management steps, readers can review the

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essential management components for each scenario. Contrarily, however, its concise nature may be a limitation because its brevity does not allow the reader to develop a comprehensive approach to navigating the differential diagnosis. This textbook therefore best serves junior learners as a useful scaffold on which to build their knowledge bank, rather than as a primary reference book.

Overall, *Emergencies in Anaesthesia – Third Edition* is an economical and useful handbook suitable for practicing physicians and those in training who are looking to review and update their CRM knowledge. Readers will appreciate the concise delivery and organization, which provides a practical supplement to more in-depth CRM references. Its UK-based contents allow North American readers to learn

approaches to managing anesthetic emergencies through the lens of another country. For Canadian readers, it can be a window to the variations in recommendations among regions.

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