

*Michael J. Avram, Ph.D., Editor*

### **Anesthesia: A Comprehensive Review, 4th Edition.**

By Brian A. Hall, M.D., Robert C. Chantigian, M.D.  
Maryland Heights, MO, Mosby Elsevier, 2010. Pages:  
448. Price: \$84.95.

When I asked an anesthesiology resident recently what he expected from a review book, he promptly said, "Something about everything." That is the real challenge any review book writer faces in today's times of pod casts and cell phone apps. The books have to have something about everything. At the same time, they need to be reasonably small, easy to read and carry, and, not to mention, cheap!!!!

The authors of *Anesthesia: A Comprehensive Review*, which is in its fourth edition, use multiple choice questions and answers with an explanation format. There are 11 chapters, divided into basic and clinical sciences sections, with a total of 997 questions. Only type A (single-answer) questions are included in this book because this is the pattern of the written board test for the American Board of Anesthesiology. At the beginning of the book, there is a useful credit page listing sources for the tables and figures used. Another useful feature is that the authors also mention the references from leading textbooks of anesthesiology in great detail, down to the relevant page numbers, at the end of each answer and explanation for a question.

Practically speaking, it is difficult to compile a useful review book in any field of medicine, but Hall and Chantigian and their team have done a commendable job. Overall, there is a good mix of questions regarding complexity and clinical relevance. Most questions are in the clinical scenario format, which is useful for different levels of users. The explanations for the answers are the keys to success in any book of this format, and this book does not disappoint in that respect. Overall, the explanations are simple, concise, and easy to read. The detailed references at the end of the explanations from leading anesthesiology texts provide the answers a further sense of legitimacy. This also gives the reader an easy resource for further reading on the relevant topic. The authors have also successfully avoided excessive repetition of questions throughout the book, which can be an easy pitfall in these types of review books.

Shortcomings of this book are few and far between. Could there be more diagrams and figures? Yes. Could there be more chapters and color in the book? Sure. But, considering the target reader is most likely a resident physician and other constraints, such as price and volume, this book does a pretty good job. The user must acknowledge that this is a "review" book and should be used as one. Now, returning to the original "demand" for something about everything, this

book will not make everyone happy but it will come pretty close.

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*(Accepted for publication July 13, 2010.)*

### **Physical Diagnosis of Pain: An Atlas of Signs and Symptoms, 2nd Edition.**

By Steven D. Waldman, M.D., J.D. Philadelphia, Saunders/Elsevier, 2010. Pages: 376. Price: \$169.00.

The pain medicine literature contains a wealth of information regarding the proper algorithms, techniques, and treatments that practitioners in the field may use. However, there has been a dearth of concise evaluation methods. As the Achilles' heel of our discipline, diagnostics too often rely on either nonspecific and dated physical examination results or indiscriminate radiographic findings to arrive at a diagnosis by exclusion. What Waldman tries to accomplish through his book, *Physical Diagnosis of Pain: An Atlas of Signs and Symptoms*, is to create a compilation of practical physical examination tools that we, as pain physicians, can use in our daily practices. As our field develops into a multidisciplinary specialty, with members of the anesthesiology, physiatry, neurology, and psychiatry disciplines, a book such as this one allows all members the proper diagnostic foothold regardless of their background.

Working cephalad to caudad, this book is arranged anatomically into 11 sections, each focusing on a region of the body (e.g., spine, trunk, extremity, or appendage). Waldman succeeds masterfully. Each section begins with an introduction to functional anatomic features and then works systematically through the visual and tactile clues that each physician may expect to find with painful conditions of the previously mentioned features. Once achieved, Waldman takes cues from the physiatry and orthopedic literature in providing detailed explanations of the specific physical assessment necessary to test for a particular malady. For instance, in section 10 on the knee, Waldman begins by providing illustrative and photographic visuals of the joint and surrounding anatomic characteristics and then explains in subsequent chapters signs on inspection and palpation that should trigger diagnosis by the examining physician. At this point, he explains 24 different physical examination tests in depth, from the common Anterior Drawer Test for anterior cruciate ligament integrity to the atypical Reverse Pivot Shift Test of Jakob for posterial instability. Each test has an accompanying picture showing the examination being performed on a patient by a physician, and a supplemental DVD pro-