

EDITORIALS

Reviews

PROBABLY more than any other clinical specialty, anesthesiology demands a wide knowledge of medicine. If the anesthetist does not know a great deal about disease, both non-surgical and surgical, his management of surgical patients with complicating disease may be faulty. The importance of this knowledge has never been more apparent than it is today when even a most desperately ill patient can be accepted for operation.

In addition, the anesthetist must be a pharmacologist and physiologist. He must constantly assess the value of new drugs in his management of patients. He must fit each anesthetic or anesthetic adjuvant to the requirements of individual patients and their diseases.

Finally, he should be a scientist. Arguments appear repeatedly concerning the moral and ethical aspects of experimentation on human beings. Yet the unique position of the anesthetist permits him, almost forces him, to conduct an experiment with every anesthetic. An anesthesia is an experiment because the anesthetist never actually knows what all the effects of his anesthetic will be until he has administered them. Where else in medicine does a physician deliberately render a patient unconscious and, in fact, not far removed from death? Despite our daily work with anesthetics, local or general, neither we nor anyone in science knows the exact mechanism by which these drugs act, although the best scientific minds have been applied to the problem. The anesthetist, by being aware of current thoughts in this as well as other problems related to anesthesia, can make observations to help fill in these important voids in our knowledge.

The days are short. One cannot spend long hours in clinical practice, also teach, fulfill administrative obligations, make scientific observations, and yet find the time to keep up with the scientific literature and correlate that literature with daily activity. For this reason, ANESTHESIOLOGY has begun a program of solicitation and publication of review articles designed to keep the anesthesiologist informed of current investigation and scientific thought. By such means, we believe the readers of the JOURNAL will be better informed, will be in a position to offer the best of care during anesthesia, and will better understand problems to be solved. The reviews may, therefore, concern general medical background, assessment of anesthetic agents, techniques, and anesthetic adjuvants, as well as scientific thought applicable to the broad field of anesthesia. When possible, a review will be published in each issue, with one entire issue a year devoted to an extensive review with many contributors. The first review appears in this issue.

New Journal Format

The double column format introduced in this issue has been necessitated by progressive increases in printing costs. The new format will allow page economy by: increasing word content per page, saving space by reducing some of the tables and figures to one half the width of a page, and the shorter lines permit the use of smaller yet easily readable type. While issues of the Journal may occasionally be smaller, the number of words and the number of articles published will not be affected. There will be an adjustment in reprint costs.