

The Anesthesiologist's Bookshelf

Edited by MEREL H. HARMEL

Spinal Acuology. By C. NORMAN SHEALY. Springfield, Illinois, Charles C Thomas, Publishers, 1969. Pp. 173. \$10.50.

Spinal acuology, as defined by the author, is the practice of diagnostic or therapeutic insertion of a needle into the spinal canal or near it. The substance of this book reflects the author's experience with this technique in treating a variety of patients who have neurosurgical problems.

The chapters on Anatomy, Lumbar Puncture, Pneumoencephalography, Myelography, Discography, Intrathecal Corticosteroids, Percutaneous Cordotomy, Miscellaneous Intrathecal Injections, and Arachnoiditis, are interesting and well documented. The roentgenographic reproductions are excellent and the bibliography valuable, especially in its historic references.

The chapter on corticosteroids is informative and worthy of perusal by anesthesiologists interested in the management of pain.

In contrast, however, the chapter, Spinal and Paraspinal Blocks, most of which has been taken almost verbatim from the work of noted authorities, is frequently undocumented, out of date, taken out of context, and incorrect. For example, the description of the technique for performing continuous spinal anesthesia is presented in continuity and within the same paragraph as the description of the technique of single-shot spinal anesthesia. Metycaine is recommended as the anesthetic of choice for caudal anesthesia, and the reader is cautioned about the possibility of transverse myelopathy and death following paravertebral injections of Efoecaine. The author documents a statement to the effect that other vasoconstrictors are less effective than epinephrine in prolonging spinal anesthesia by the statement that "epinephrine (1:1,000) prolongs spinal anesthesia 50%, and 1% phenylephrine prolongs it 100%." There is virtually no bibliographic substantiation for most of the statements presented as fact in this chapter. This is in direct contrast to the other chapters, which deal with subjects within the author's field, where the bibliography is extensive.

This glaring deficiency makes it difficult for this reviewer to recommend this volume as an authoritative treatment of "spinal acuology."

ALON P. WINNIE, M.D.
Cook County Hospital
Chicago, Illinois

Gas Chromatography in Biology and Medicine. A Ciba Foundation Symposium. EDITED BY RUTH PORTER. London, J. & A. Churchill, Ltd., 1969. Pp. 213.

This volume is an edited version of a CIBA Foundation Symposium on the above subject held in London in February 1969. Under the chairmanship of Professor Payne, Research Department of Anaesthetics, Royal College of Surgeons, England, 24 experts in the field, representing many countries and disciplines, met "to promote the exchange of ideas about gas chromatography and its application."

Gas chromatography, less than 20 years old, has already won for itself an indispensable place in the armamentarium of the analytical chemist, and in more recent years it has figured prominently in medical research, as both a qualitative and a quantitative instrument. However, the subject of gas chromatography remains an esoteric one, and the proceedings of this Symposium are no less so. In this light it is particularly gratifying that the majority of the physicians invited to participate were anesthesiologists, a tribute to the part played by the specialty in developing and utilizing this technique for both clinical and research purposes.

Following the introductory papers, including one on historical background by Professor A. J. P. Martin, the father of both paper and gas chromatography, the presentations were grouped under Design, Biological and Medical Applications, and Trends and Developments.

The sections on Design and Trends and Development are of interest mainly to those with some background in chromatography. Some papers summarize available information, while others present new experimental work or philosophize on the direction which chromatography and analytical techniques should take in the future.

The section on Biological and Medical Application holds the most of general interest to the physician, and especially the anesthesiologist. The presentation by Dr. Lowe of the University of Chicago describes the use of chromatography to measure anesthetic agents in blood and to compute their lipid partition coefficients. For the first time comparative and complete data on anesthetic solubility and partition coefficients in terms of human and other species are made available.