

The Anesthesiologist's Bookshelf

Edited by MEREL H. HARMEL

Acupuncture. The Ancient Chinese Art of Healing. By FELIX MANN. London, Heinemann, reprinted 1970. Pp. 178. 61 illustrations. Distributed in the U.S.A. by Tao Books & Publications, Boston, Mass. 02110. Cloth, \$4.95.

Since the appearance of the article in the *New York Times* by James Reston,* the report in *Science* by Arthur Galston and Ethan Signer,† and coverage by the mass media, many an anesthesiologist must have thought himself in intellectual double-jeopardy on being asked to explain Chinese acupuncture anesthesia when not fully aware even of the existence of acupuncture.

Fortunately, a book originally written in 1962 and now in its third revised reprinting can remedy the deficit. Although not specifically dealing with the more recent uses of acupuncture to produce localized anesthesia for surgery, here is a book as remarkable as it is unique in being the only contemporary occidental source in English. The author is singularly qualified to make a synthesis of the classic Chinese healing art and occidental medicine, having studied with European medical acupuncture practitioners, learned Chinese, read the original treatises, and visited the Chinese People's Republic in the 1960's.

The Westerner on first encounter with the philosophy of classical acupuncture (available in China since the neolithic era) may experience a kind of reverse future shock when exposed to Yang, Yin, meridians, points, and the Triple Warmer. But, on the other hand, can we really explain chemical anesthesia with any more certainty?

Dr. Mann offers a scientific rationale for many of the observed effects of acupuncture based upon embryology, physiology, neuroanatomy, and comparative anatomy. Anesthesiologists who read his book will be better prepared to evaluate the impact of acupuncture on our specialty and to cope with future questions about Ying-Yang imbalance, the optimal time for pulmonary therapy (0300-0500 hours local time), and why the classic method of diagnosis involves palpating both radial pulses in a total of twelve (12) ways!

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* "A View from Shanghai."

† "Education and Science in China."

Neuroelectric Research. EDITED BY DAVID V. REYNOLDS AND ANITA E. SJOBERG. Springfield, Ill., Charles C Thomas, 1971. Pp. 466. \$27.25.

This volume consists of 45 papers, presented at the 1969 Conference of the Neuroelectric Society, dealing with the therapeutic uses of electricity based on research in electronarcosis, electroanesthesia, and/or electrosleep and electroneuroprosthesis. While nothing new is added to what has already been known about the possible use of electricity in anesthesiology, the sections on electroanesthesia, electroanalgesia, and electrosleep are of special interest to the anesthesiologist. The use of electricity as an immobilizing agent for animal operations is well documented; however, there is no clear evidence that there has been any advance in the use of electroanesthesia in man.

Of limited but special interest is the paper by C. Norman Shealy and J. Thomas Mortimer on the control of pain employing dorsal column electroanalgesia, achieved by the implanting of dorsal column stimulators. This article reports the effects of such treatment in four patients in whom relief of pain was achieved successfully; however, the patients also developed a buzzing or tingling sensation which radiated from the site of the stimulator down the spinal cord through the sciatic nerves to the feet, a somewhat disturbing phenomenon.

There are also interesting theoretical sections on volume conductor theory and voltage distribution in the brain during the application of electric current.

Sections on instrumentation and electrical models complete the book. A worthwhile article devoted to the confusion of terminology that exists in the field of electronarcosis, electroanesthesia, and electrosleep is illuminating. The section on electroneuroprosthesis, which describes such things as tactile television, the treatment of spasticity through functional electrical stimulation, and the neural considerations in the healing of ulcerated tissues by the clinical electrotherapeutic application of a weak direct current, makes interesting reading.

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