

Book Reviews

Childbirth—A Joy—Not a Suffering. BY E. ABouleish. Philadelphia, Dorrance & Company Inc., 1975. Pages: 110. Price: \$2.95.

This short, inexpensive paperback is intended as a general overview of the methods currently available for pain relief during labor and delivery. It is directed toward readers with a non-medical background. The format is a question-and-answer one, developed from material presented at parents-to-be lectures at Magee-Women's Hospital in Pittsburgh. As a result, it obviously reflects to a large extent the practices of the author and the local customs of his busy institution. It is not intended for the obstetric anesthesiologist and is therefore written in a non-technical manner and avoids discussion of some of the controversial aspects of obstetric anesthesia management. Dr. Abouleish has succeeded in presenting a balanced view of the available obstetric anesthesia methods. He includes chapters on the commonly used regional anesthetic procedures, as well as on non-pharmacologic methods of analgesia such as hypnosis, acupuncture, and natural childbirth. Included is a delightful account of the circumstances surrounding Dr. Abouleish's own birth in his native homeland of Egypt. The author waxes a bit sentimental at times, but succeeds in conveying the message that there are safe and effective means of pain relief during labor and delivery for those parturients who desire them.

Unfortunately, little mention is made of recent work on the transplacental passage of local anesthetics and their potential influence on the fetus and neonate, a subject likely to be widely publicized in lay circles.

Grammatical and typographical errors are sprinkled throughout the book, but do not seriously detract from the author's overall message. The many footnotes are somewhat distracting and probably repetitious, since a glossary of unfamiliar terms is included at the end of the book. The author's recommendations for central maternity centers and increased availability of trained obstetric anesthesia personnel are sound.

Overall, the book is a suitable basic introduction to obstetric anesthesia management for lay persons. Medical or nursing personnel who require a more in-depth coverage will find it very useful.

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A Basis and Practice of Neuroanesthesia. BY E. GORDON. New York, American Elsevier Publishing Co., Inc., 1975. Pages: 274. Price: \$31.25.

The first half of Gordon's book is a discussion by various authorities of the advances that have been made in basic understanding of the physiology

of the central nervous system in the past ten years. It includes sections on neurophysiology of anesthesia and related modern electroencephalographic research, cerebral metabolism as affected by hypoxia, the effect of anesthesia on cerebral metabolism, and also chapters on cerebral blood flow and intracranial pressure. There is some conflict between the authors of Chapter 3 on Cerebral Metabolism and Chapter 4 on Cerebral Blood Flow with diametrically opposed statements referring to the protection afforded by anesthetics in hypoxia and the critical levels of the effects of induced hypotension. Notable are reference lists at the end of each chapter and the avoidance of hackneyed chapters of history.

The second half, on the practice of neuroanesthesia, by one author from one point of view, sets forth Emerie Gordon's approach to clinical problems and makes for an exceedingly informative and useful book. It should also help the young (and flexible) neurosurgeon understand some of the complications entailed by modern anesthesia technique.—A.J.G. and B.R.F.

Anesthesiology Continuing Education Review. BY R. E. JOHNSTONE. Flushing, N.Y., Medical Examination Publishing Co., Inc., 1975. Pages: 175. Price: \$10.00.

Seven hundred questions and answers, each with one journal reference, make up this handy loose-leaf pocketbook, ranging from preoperative, intra-operative, postoperative, and intensive care, through regional, pediatric, obstetric, neurosurgical and cardiac anesthesia, to anesthetic pharmacology, physiology and engineering. Picking out every hundredth question yields the following: When is awake intubation of pediatric patients indicated? How is blood pressure monitored during hypotension? How is Horner's syndrome reversed? Can positive end-expiratory pressure be administered to infants without endotracheal intubation? Which factors increase automaticity of ectopic pacemakers? What is the water loss due to dry gas inhalation? Does methoxyflurane cause hepatitis? Do anesthetics affect cell replication? The seven-line answers are crammed with information and *ex-cathedra* advice.

Being an inveterate collector of useful and useless statistics, I counted 320 questions from ANESTHESIOLOGY, 137 from *Anesthesia and Analgesia*, 51 from the *New England Journal of Medicine*, 27 from the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 21 from the *American Journal of Medicine*, 13 each from *Critical Care Medicine*, *Annals of Internal Medicine* and *Archives of Surgery*, and 105 from 45 other journals. Fewer than 20 of the questions are taken from foreign publications. Dr. Johnstone says that the book was fun to write and should be fun to read. Hmm, pretty ascertive fun. The index enables one to use the book