

# Book Reviews

B. Raymond Fink, M.D., Editor

**Anesthesia for Neurological Surgery.** BY K. P. GEEVARGHESE. Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1977. Pages: 350. Price: \$35.00.

In the preface the editor states that his aim is not to cover the entire subject of neuroanesthesia but to present a wide range of topics on the subject, with emphasis on basic considerations and care of patients. He has succeeded very well indeed in this up-to-the-minute volume.

All major problems in anesthetizing neurosurgical patients are discussed and methods for various neurosurgical procedures are presented, together with a rationale for their use. In addition, the proper monitoring of these patients is fully outlined.

Although there are numerous authors, each topic is presented in a clear and concise manner. The editor has generally succeeded in maintaining an overall sense of continuity and style throughout the book.

This book, together with Michenfelder's classic review of neuroanesthesia (*ANESTHESIOLOGY* 30:65-100, 1969) provide all the necessary information for anesthesiologists in training, or those preparing for board certification, or for the clinician who will be administering anesthesia to neurosurgical patients.

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**Practical Techniques in Venipuncture.** BY P. E. SCRANTON, JR. Baltimore, Williams and Wilkins, 1977. Pages: 70. Price: \$5.50.

This manual is aimed at providing the professional beginner and paramedical assistant with the practical aspects of the various methods for introducing tubes and needles into veins, whether for infusion administration, monitoring, or phlebotomy.

There are specific chapters on the butterfly, plastic catheters, and phlebotomy, with a special description of the approach to cannulation of major veins. Of interest are the details given about procuring and maintaining venoclysis in the scalp and umbilical veins.

This booklet serves its purpose by providing clues and tips relating to the anatomic references of the most commonly used methods of venipuncture, their variations, and some of the possible complications, but for the purist this manual is plagued with pécadillos—the use of trade names of drugs and catheters, interjection of some intern jargon terms, and the inconsistent use of Greek-root spelling of some words and not of others. Although some of these mishaps may, with good will, be overlooked for the sake of maintaining simplicity and practicality, others may be unforgivable. The bibliography at the end is far too small for anyone attempting to use this manual as a reference. The labelling of the infiltration of local anesthetic drugs before the insertion of intravenous catheters as a "misdirected mission of mercy," the intricate and misguided description of the technique of subclavian-vein catheterization, and the omission of the "J" wire modification for external jugular vein cannulation are serious shortcomings.

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**Medicine for Anaesthetists.** EDITED BY M. D. VICKERS. Oxford, Blackwell Scientific Publications, and Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, 1977. Pages: 571. Price: \$59.50.

The Preface to *Medicine for Anaesthetists* states that for each medical disorder, the anesthesiologist needs to know . . . what it means in terms of function. Can the patient be improved in the time available? How does one decide when the situation is optimal? What else might go wrong with the patient? The intent of this book is, thus, to provide a textbook of medicine from this special perspective.

There is no doubt that virtually all anesthesiologists would value an authoritative work that filled these requirements, and it is, therefore, disappointing to report that we still do not have one.

A serious problem, as with so many multi-authored books, is the unevenness. Some of the chapters are excellent, some acceptable, and some do not appear to have been written with any special perspective in mind. In all, there are 17 chapters, each dealing with a different branch of medicine.

The promise of the preface is immediately dashed by the first chapter, on heart disease. It is largely a catalog of dusty diagnoses, with little that will aid an anesthesiologist confused with the new tools of diagnostic cardiology, or one trying to assess when management is optimal, etc. Heart failure, for example, is discussed in 6½ desultory pages; Na<sup>+</sup>-K<sup>+</sup> ATPases are mentioned at least twice in this space, but there is no mention of differential diagnosis, assessment of functional reserve, definition of contractility, or diagnostic aids. The discussion of digitalis and its toxicity is inadequate for the sometimes urgent dictates of surgery. Frankly, the chapter is boring, and it is perhaps significant that it is the only one in the book that has no references.

The second chapter, "Vascular Diseases," is excellent, although it would have been better titled "Hypertension and Ischaemic Heart Disease" because that is its subject matter. The third, "Lung Disease" is also good, but contains some very poor illustrations, some inaccuracies, and a curious disregard for the symbols in general use for respiratory modalities. Respiratory failure is allotted a scant two pages, and a quarter of this space is devoted to high-dose corticosteroid therapy, with the somewhat surprising claim that "most authorities recommend (it) . . ."

The next two chapters, "Renal Disease" and "Liver Disease," are outstanding. The usual lists of diagnostic labels are replaced by functional differentiations, and the discussion throughout is relevant, well written, and comprehensive. There are some other well-prepared chapters, such as "The Endocrine and Pancreas," "Pituitary Disease," "Convective Tissue Disorders," "Medical Genetics Relevant to Anesthesia," and "Thyroid and Parathyroid Disease."

The chapter, "Diseases of the Central Nervous System," epitomizes those that fail. This is a mini-synopsis containing 80 brain syndromes in 60 pages, with no attempt to convey a general approach to assessment. As a replacement for a standard text, it is inadequate and, for the special requirement of the anesthesiologist, it is inappropriate. The same problem occurs with "Hematological Disorders," where in 25 pages of anemias there is no discussion of the relevant pathophysiology of the recurrent controversy as to the pros and cons of delaying anesthesia and operation for the treatment of anemia.

The remaining five chapters fall between these two extremes. "Acute Biochemical Disorders" and "Nutritional Disorders" are nicely written, but somewhat incomplete. "Medical Diseases in Pregnancy," "Peripheral Nervous Disease," and "Adrenal Disease" are reasonably complete, but make pedestrian reading.

Overall, the book falls far short of expectations, with even the best sections failing to answer the questions posed in the preface. This volume, therefore, cannot be recommended to anesthesiologists, either as a replacement for a textbook of medicine, or as representing a special viewpoint not already adequately covered in available anesthesiology texts.

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**Anatomy for Anaesthetists.** EDITED BY H. ELLIS AND S. FELDMAN. Oxford, Blackwell Scientific Publishers, and Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, 1977. Pages: 397. Price: \$31.00.

With the explosion of biomedical knowledge and teaching, there is less time in the pre-clinical curriculum to devote to gross anatomy nowadays, and many of those aspects of this subject relevant to a particular clinical specialty must be studied during postgraduate residency training. This book is intended to familiarize the trainee anesthesiologist with the applied gross anatomy that is important for a full understanding of the specialty. To this extent it more than succeeds.

With the renewed interest and increasing popularity of regional anesthesia techniques, there is need for such a book, for an understanding of applied anatomy is a prerequisite to the successful use of regional anesthesia. Although originally intended as a text for the old primary F.F.A.R.C.S. exam, this new edition has been extensively rewritten and now includes an anesthetist as a joint author. Any resident or registrar who is familiar with the contents of this book would be more than ably prepared to answer questions in his respective specialty exam on either side of the Atlantic. The book does not claim to be an instruction manual in nerve block. It does, however, describe the anatomic details of many blocks and, in the opinion of this reviewer at least, a knowledge of the underlying anatomy is even more important than a knowledge of surface landmarks learned by rote when attempting to approximate a needle to an underlying nerve. The compact presentation deals in turn with the anatomy of the respiratory system, the heart, the contents of the vertebral canal, the peripheral nerves; a final chapter, "Zones of Anesthetic Interest," includes detailed accounts of the thoracic inlet, diaphragm, intercostal spaces, abdominal wall, antecubital fossa, and the great veins of the neck. The authors have selectively emphasized the areas of special importance to the anesthesiologist. The illustrations are line drawings, clear, easily understood, well-labelled and liberally used throughout the book to complement the text.

All in all, this book is recommended to all anesthesiologists, but especially to those whose current knowledge of anatomy needs brushing up, either for imminent examinations or for the better understanding of daily practice.

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**Malignant Hyperthermia: Current Concepts.** EDITED BY E. O. HENSCHEL. New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1977. Pages: 162. Prices: \$12.50.

Publishing a book on "current concepts" in a field in which active investigation of basic mechanisms and therapy is in progress poses

real problems. This is especially true when parts of the book are based on a 1974 symposium, although the references indicate updating of information contained in several chapters.

One of the most useful aspects of the book is a tear-apart page that outlines a step-by-step approach to the treatment of malignant hyperthermia (MH). The outline can be adapted to one's own situation, and if it provides the stimulus to organize an anesthetic department's planned approach to the therapy of MH, it will have achieved a commendable purpose.

Part I of the book deals with clinical aspects of human MH and is the stronger section of the volume. A brief history of the syndrome's recognition in a particular region points out the importance of careful and thoughtful clinical observation in the initiation of investigation and the development of rational therapy. The main content of Part I deals with the recognition and therapy of MH. One chapter reviews in detail the clinical and laboratory findings gleaned from records of some 425 patients in whose cases MH developed. Two separate authors deal with the therapy of MH by differing approaches. This is unfortunate since there is little explanation as to why the order of priorities differs and since only one of the approaches corresponds to the outline on the previously mentioned tear-out page. Management of elective anesthesia in a suspected MH patient deserves more detailed discussion than it receives.

Part II of the book deals with basic research in MH. The only chapter of this section likely to interest the clinician concerns the contractile mechanism and possible abnormalities that might be responsible for MH. The remainder describes porcine MH and seems mainly to be a concerted effort to support the hypothesis that the etiology of MH is excess norepinephrine activity. This concept does not presently seem viable.

Because in the first portion several experts on MH summarize and provide commentary on a vast array of referenced recent information, the book belongs on the shelf of anyone seriously interested in MH. Unfortunately, a major new thrust in therapy with dantrolene sodium was evolving as the book was in press, so that relatively little information about this drug is available in the book.

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**Handbook on Injectable Drugs.** BY L. A. TRISSEL. Washington, D.C., American Society of Hospital Pharmacists, Inc., 1977. Pages: 428. Price: \$15.00.

In the world of pharmacologic literature, this handbook stands out as unusual, if not unique. Because a great deal has been written about therapeutic incompatibilities and other drug interactions, the author limits this book to physical compatibilities and incompatibilities only. It is a collection of alphabetically arranged monographs concerning 158 commercially available drugs and 35 investigational ones. The author attempts to compile, under a single cover, a large amount of widely scattered data. To facilitate the use of this vast amount of information, the author uses a standardized format and provides a section on how to use the handbook. Most of the data are presented in tabular form using abbreviations. All the information is documented from primary sources.

The 104 abbreviations used extensively throughout the book make it difficult to read and almost unusable in the emergency situation. Fortunately, most of the drugs included in the handbook are not for emergency use. More than a third are vitamins, antibiotics, or anticancer agents.

The author is a pharmacist writing for the hospital-based