

# Book Reviews

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**Atlas of Emergency Medicine.** BY PETER ROSEN, and GEORGE L. STERNBACH. Baltimore, WILLIAMS and WILKINS, 1979. Pages: 165. Price: \$17.95.

With the increasing scope and extent of services provided in the emergency medical service departments of hospitals, many of which are equipped with observation wards and operating rooms and have residency training programs in emergency medicine, a comprehensive up-to-date book on emergency surgical-medical procedures would be welcome. This book is trying to make an attempt in that direction. It lists and summarizes general emergency procedures in various areas, e.g., CPR, venous and arterial cannulation, general surgery, ENT, eye, and orthopedics. It even includes the conduct of a normal vaginal delivery in an emergency. The authors have used a uniform format to describe each procedure: a protocol briefing the main steps followed by comments on errors and complications. Each procedure is illustrated by line drawings.

There are some flaws in the text; a few illustrations in the book (for example, figures 3A and 5C) are incomplete or inaccurate.

The subject of external defibrillation is not mentioned. The protocol on endotracheal tube suctioning omits the important steps of pre- and post-suction oxygenation. I do not think that the advice to apply cricoid pressure if a patient vomits during endotracheal intubation is sound. Finally, on the subject of endotracheal intubation, I just cannot understand the meaning of "failure to assure a patent upper airway prior to intubation may cause indications for a preferable procedure—cricothyrotomy or the chest thrust—to be missed."

Although the depth of material is not adequate to serve as a textbook for a physician who is training for, or practicing in, emergency medicine, the book should be valuable as a pocket synopsis for nurses, medical students, and paramedics who are working in the emergency room and who should know the essential steps of the procedures carried out in an emergency. The volume may also be useful as a guide for physicians preparing course material for paramedics. Although the authors have not written a preface to the book, I presume that this is in fact may be their intention.

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**Pharmacology of Respiratory Therapy Medications.** BY MICHAEL J. STRAUCH. Chicago, Year Book Medical Publishers, 1979. Pages: 249. Price: PNS.

The author's stated intention is to provide a "complete and compact" source of information for respiratory therapy medications to be used "as a textbook in the classroom, as a handbook at the bedside, and as a reference book." It is meant to aid therapists, nurses, physicians and paramedical personnel who deal with pulmonary problems. Perhaps because of the breadth of the intended audience and the scope of the subject addressed, this work falls short of its purpose.

After several rather superficial introductory chapters, the material is classified according to medication type, using an outline scheme of organization. Although useful for locating isolated bits of information, the outline format hinders fluid exposition when more detailed explanation is required. The result is a text that is frequently a series of lists or a string of disconnected sentences. A disproportionate amount of material is repetitious.

The treatment of the information, despite its wide range, is uneven, uncritical, and in many instances, imprecise. Little effort has been expended in critically reviewing and synthesizing primary sources of information; package inserts, *The Physicians' Desk Reference*, and data obtained directly from pharmaceutical companies are major references.

With a few notable exceptions (the design and proper use of the spinhaler is one example) the illustrations generally have marginal relevance to the text, and many are taken unaltered from experimental studies without sufficient explanation to make meaningful interpretation possible.

This book contains a considerable body of potentially useful information. However, it cannot be recommended either as a definitive reference or as a textbook. Its major use would be as a compendium of dosages, precautions, and potential hazards of respiratory medications and as a source to identify the generic equivalents and classifications of proprietary drugs. Similar information is already available in widely used existing sources.

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**Management of Acute Intracranial Disaster.** EDITED BY RONALD V. TRUBNOVICH. Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1979. Pages: 448. Price: \$35.00/annum.

The editor has gathered together a truly international array of experts (from Europe, the United States, New Zealand). The individual contributions in themselves are generally well written and contain a vast quantity of useful information on the subject.

A problem arises in determining who would best profit from this volume. Its editor feels that the volume "will benefit medical personnel working in critical care by . . . outlining the practical detail of therapy for selected acute intracranial disasters." I feel that physicians actively working daily in the area of neurologic supportive care should already know the information contained in this volume. The busy anesthesiologist could profit more from a condensed version. As it stands, this volume would most benefit anesthesiology residents in training and those preparing for their oral examinations, and would certainly be a useful addition to any department of anesthesiology's library.

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