

BOOK REVIEWS

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Neural Blockade in Clinical Anesthesia and Management of Pain.
By MICHAEL J. COUSINS, M.D. and PHILLIP O. BRIDENBAUGH, M.D. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, 1980. Pages: 754. Price: \$95.00.

"The book is indeed encyclopedic in its coverage and like encyclopedias in other sciences, each section has been entrusted to a recognized world authority in his own special field." So states Sir Robert MacIntosh in the Foreword. This statement completely defines the book. It is truly an encyclopedia of neural blockade.

The editors, with assistance from 39 other internationally known contributors, have organized the book into an introduction and three major parts. The introduction is a very interesting, concise discussion of the history of local anesthesia. The first major portion of the book presents the pharmacology and physiology of neural blockade. The second contains many chapters discussing various aspects of the wide variety of techniques. This particular part contains numerous sections elaborating techniques for central neural blockade and blockade of the extremities, thorax, abdomen, head, and neck. Special considerations for applications of blockade for various specialized surgical procedures, as well as, possible complications are presented in great depth. The third part of the book deals with applications of these methodologies to the management of pain.

Most chapters are organized in a similar manner. Those discussing techniques contain a brief history, indications for the particular type of blockade, anatomical considerations with numerous figures and tables, physiologic aspects, considerations unique to the technique, types of anesthetic agents required, and a list of complications.

The book is well-organized, and can be used for quick reference.

There are no abbreviated lists summarizing techniques and other pertinent information for fast review. Each topic is handled in depth. Most chapters are clearly, concisely written and easily understood. Figures and tables are simple, well-defined and appropriately utilized to assist the reader in understanding the material. Although the book is technical, many topics are presented in such a manner that hold the reader's interest. Each chapter has numerous references for those desiring to pursue a particular topic further. For completeness, several chapters end with an appendix containing definitions and other highlights.

I was particularly impressed with the chapter discussing intravenous regional blocks (Chapter 12). I found information in this chapter that I had heard but had never seen in print. The last chapter (Chapter 31) presents some interesting views for the future of the science of neural blockade.

Even though the work is voluminous, I highly recommend this book to individuals at all levels of experience and interest. It can easily serve the medical student and resident, as well as, the specialist in pain management. It should be in every medical and department of anesthesiology library. It is a book for reference; it is a book to read.

One of the major distractions is the price. However, at today's inflation rate, it is still a bargain.

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