

## BOOK REVIEWS

Edward Lowenstein, M.D., Editor

**Drug Disposition in Anesthesia.** BY DONALD R. STANSKI AND W. DAVID WATKINS. New York, Grune and Stratton, 1982. Pages: 203. Price: \$24.50.

Until now, anesthesiologists have had to turn to pharmacology textbooks to gain information about the pharmacokinetics of drugs commonly used in anesthetic practice. When doing so, the reader has become immersed quickly in equations, diagrams, and discussion of compartments, clearances, and volumes of distribution for a variety of drugs not used by anesthetists. Stanski and Watkins have focused their attention on drugs such as thiopental, curare, pancuronium, and fentanyl and have used these drugs to examine pharmacokinetic principles in anesthetic practice.

The first two chapters examine the basic concepts of pharmacokinetics and biotransformation. While equations and curves frequently are displayed, they are concise and well explained. The use of diagrams and tables helps the reader build his own framework of reference for application to drugs. The biotransformation section successfully summarizes a vast quantity of data in this rapidly expanding area. The references are up-to-date and allow the reader more depth if he so chooses. A good understanding of these two chapters allows for a meaningful interpretation of the following four chapters.

These last four chapters set this book apart from many others. They deal with intravenous anesthetics, muscle relaxants and cholinesterase inhibitors, narcotics and naloxone, and the benzodiazepines. The commonly used drugs in these categories are discussed in detail. For example, the pharmacokinetic differences between methohexital and thiopental are illustrated. As the authors rightly point out, however, the clinical studies do not demonstrate such clear-cut differences. Suggestions for the disparity are offered, and the nature of additional studies necessary to resolve these differences is characterized. The other chapters are similar in their approach.

Stanski and Watkins have written a textbook on the drugs currently in use in our anesthetic practice. The book is an excellent reference source. It is concise, relevant, and synthesizes a body of information that allows the administration of anesthesia to be more scientific. It will appeal to both the novice as well as the experienced practitioner.

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**Thoracic Anesthesia.** EDITED BY JOEL A. KAPLAN, M.D. New York, Churchill Livingstone, Inc., 1982. Pages: 762. Price: \$79.00.

The anesthetic management of the patient undergoing thoracic surgery is unique in many ways. If it is to be done properly, anesthesia for thoracotomy requires an understanding of the physiology of one-lung ventilation, the special problems of the patient with pulmonary and often co-existing cardiac disease, and the techniques that will bring the patient safely through the operative and postoperative period.

The goal of *Thoracic Anesthesia*, as stated in its preface, is to improve the anesthetic care for patients undergoing thoracic surgery. Although several British books have been available on this subject, an American text on anesthesia for thoracic surgery as practiced in this country has been awaited for a long time.

Dr. Kaplan's *Thoracic Anesthesia* is a comprehensive, up-to-date, easy-to-read overview of this rapidly emerging anesthetic subspecialty. The book is organized into five sections that cover all aspects of thoracic

anesthesia. These sections are 1) "Thoracic Anesthesia and Surgery"—the history of thoracic anesthesia and a review of thoracic surgery; 2) "Assessment of the Patient"—including the preoperative evaluation and preparation of the patient and intraoperative monitoring; 3) "Cardiopulmonary Physiology"—emphasizing the pulmonary circulation and the physiology of one-lung ventilation; 4) "Specific Anesthetic Considerations"—describing the appropriate management of specific procedures, and 5) "Postoperative Intensive Care"—with an emphasis on the latest techniques for postoperative ventilation. Surgeons, pediatricians, internists, and radiologists, as well as anesthesiologists, contributed chapters in their individual areas of expertise. Like all multiauthored texts, there is some variability in clarity and expression between chapters but to a lesser degree than many other books with 25 contributing authors. Some of the chapters are concise and deal with a specific problem; e.g., the chapters "Anesthesia for Bronchopleural Lavage" and "Endobronchial Intubation." Other chapters cover whole fields, such as the chapters "Thoracic Surgery" and "Radiology of the Chest." These reviews are complete and could be published independently as monographs. All the chapters are referenced thoroughly for those interested in reading further on a particular subject.

There is little this reviewer found fault with in this book. The tables and figures in chapter 9 (Anesthesia for Thoracic Diagnostic Procedures) are presented several pages beyond the text to which they refer. The reader constantly must look ahead to the tables, then turn back to continue reading. Occasionally, an author will make a statement or describe a technique that could be challenged. However, this is to be expected, because the text reflects the experience of the individual authors. My most serious criticism of the book is its failure to adequately describe the management of postoperative pain. This extremely important subject is covered in only a few paragraphs. Recent advances, particularly with the use of epidural narcotics and cryoanalgesia to the intercostal nerves, as well as the older, more conventional methods of pain relief, require more extensive discussion. I hope future editions will cover this subject in the detail it deserves.

Dr. Kaplan states that *Thoracic Anesthesia* should serve as a useful source of information, not only for anesthesia residents and fellows, but also for practicing anesthesiologists, intensivists, pulmonary medicine physicians, and thoracic surgeons. In preparing this review, I asked several of our residents who had read *Thoracic Anesthesia* for their opinions about it. They all praised the book and felt that for their level of training, it was well worth reading—an important critique for a textbook by one segment of the audience for which it is intended. The book now is required reading for our residents during the month they spend on their "thoracic anesthesia rotation."

As a reference book covering the entire field of thoracic anesthesia, this book has few equals. It will long stand as "The Text" for anyone interested in providing optimal care for the patient undergoing thoracic surgery. I highly recommend it to anyone involved in the anesthetic management of these patients.

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**How to Write and Publish Papers in the Medical Sciences.** BY EDWARD J. HUTH, M.D. Philadelphia, iSi Press, 1982. Pages: 203. Price: \$11.95 (soft cover) and \$17.95 (hard cover).

The author of this book unquestionably is qualified to advise would-be authors of medical science papers. Dr. Huth currently is Editor of *Annals of Internal Medicine*, and over the years he has had