

BOOK REVIEW

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Anesthesia for Ambulatory Surgery. Second Edition. EDITED BY BERNARD V. WETCHLER. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, 1990. Pages: 690. Price: \$69.50.

I am pleased that a second edition of this highly popular text has been published. Although the chapter titles remain essentially the same, each chapter has been thoroughly revised, updated, and often enlarged. It is not surprising that in the process the book has increased from 476 pages to 690 pages. Dr. Bernard Wetchler, the editor, is a pioneer in the field of outpatient anesthesia as well as one of the founders of the Society for Ambulatory Anesthesia (SAMBA). He should also receive a major portion of the credit for establishing the subspecialty of ambulatory anesthesia in the United States.

The text's organization is very logical throughout and should appeal to practicing anesthesiologists. Not only are the anesthetic aspects of various types of outpatient surgery well covered in the various chapters, but the administrative, legal, organizational, planning, and marketing aspects are also discussed with authority. In addition, Dr. Wetchler maintains excellent uniformity throughout and generally avoids the common problem of unnecessary repetition by the different authors from chapter to chapter.

I was impressed by several features of this book. Short biographies of the authors are included at the beginning of the text and provide a personal touch. The unmistakable tone throughout is one of "practicality." The editor has carefully chosen authors who are good clinicians themselves. Instead of simply reviewing the available literature, the authors make it a point to provide interpretations of specific problems and descriptions of how these problems are handled at their individual institutions. The writing style is clear and easy to understand. One approach used in several chapters is to stimulate provocative discussions by posing common controversial questions or citing interesting case reports. This is most evident in the chapters entitled "Problem Solving in the Postanesthesia Care Units," "Complications," "Legal Implications," and "In the Real World."

The chapter "Ambulatory Surgery: Past, Present and Future," written by a nonanesthesiologist, gives a first-rate account of the history of outpatient anesthesia in the United States (though it generally ignores the rest of the world) and a convincing insight into the future. "Selec-

tion" and "Pediatric Patients" are both well-written chapters. Although very informative, the chapter "Adult and Geriatric Patients" (112 pages long, with 494 references) could certainly be condensed. The chapters entitled "Local and Regional Anesthesia" and "A Successful Facility" are also excellent.

In such a high-quality book, however, it is distressing to see such sweeping statements as "patients at risk of developing acid aspiration syndrome have been defined as those with gastric pH below 2.5 and gastric volume above 25 ml" (page 208) or "outpatients who were at highest risk for acid aspiration, *i.e.*, gastric volume > 25 ml and pH < 2.5" (page 465). Although this misconception is unfortunately still rampant in the "scientific" literature, no one so far has shown this to be true in humans. Thus, the conclusions of innumerable published papers based on this incorrect premise are questionable. Unproven statements like these appearing in a contemporary text tend to perpetuate this misconception.

A final unique and useful feature of this book is the compilation of "Forms and Policy Statements" from a number of ambulatory surgery facilities in the United States and one from the United Kingdom. This section will be very helpful to persons establishing or revamping their ambulatory surgery practices and policies.

In summary, the second edition of this premier text on outpatient anesthesia is a great improvement over the previous edition. It is a very practical and tremendously informative volume. Lessons learned from the practice of outpatient anesthesia already are influencing the practice of anesthesia in all other fields. I recommend that every anesthesia care provider who is interested in the tremendous advances taking place in this new—and still emerging—subspecialty acquire a copy of this book.

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ERRATUM

In the review of *Anesthesiology and Vascular Surgery*, edited by M. P. Yeager and D. D. Glass (Ellis JE: Book reviews, *ANESTHESIOLOGY* 74:636, 1991), the pages and price listed were incorrect. The correct number of pages is 395, and the correct price is \$75.00.