

## ■ BOOK REVIEWS

Carol A. Hirshman, M.D., Editor

**Interactive Regional Anesthesia.** By Oscar Fernandez, Anibal Galindo, and Patricia Galindo. New York, Churchill Livingstone, 1994. CD-ROM for Macintosh and Windows computers. Price: \$255.00.

In recent years, computers with CD-ROM and multimedia capabilities are being used by an increasing number of professionals as a convenient and compact means to access texts and other educational materials. Because this product is the first CD-ROM that introduces concepts on regional anesthesia, we viewed it with considerable initial enthusiasm. There are a number of positive features to this educational tool, but deficiencies in technical and educational aspects of this program dampened our zest.

The contents of this CD-ROM appear in 12 sections or "chapters." Screens contain information that either can be read by the user or narrated. Regional anesthetic concepts and techniques are introduced through brief movies, interactive screens, animations, and three-dimensional models in the middle ten sections. The first section exclusively displays videos of regional procedures that are subsequently shown in the CD-ROM with their respective sections. The last section contains an index.

Sections 2 through 4 deal with the history of regional anesthesia, physiology and pharmacology, and principles of electrolocation. The history section provides a brief overview of contributions from Pare (1564) to Davis and Mandel (1986); the descriptions have prompts that can be activated to obtain more information. The physiology and pharmacology section presents information leading to a better understanding of local anesthetic mechanisms. Further elaboration and explanation of pKa, metabolites, adverse drug effects, and drug toxicity would have improved this section. The section on principles of electrolocation provides a basic introduction for a technique that Fernandez *et al.* advocate for all regional procedures; they believe that this technique enhances the safety and accuracy of all regional anesthetic procedures. The ability to retrieve the references within the text is a useful feature.

The fifth and seventh sections focus on procedures on the head and neck. Areas discussed include regional anesthetic techniques for blockade of the gasserian ganglion; the posterior scapular, trigeminal, and facial nerves; and the superficial and deep cervical plexus. A more detailed description of the source and path of the trigeminal nerve would have been helpful. The video on the lateral approach to the trigeminal nerve was superb, but the addition of audio would have improved the understanding of the procedure. This complaint applies to a number of the videos.

The sixth section deals with the anatomy and blocks of the eye. Blocks are described with the use of specific agents without a rationale for the choice of agents. The last "page" has an instructive interactive screen in which one can observe eye movements after certain ocular nerves are anesthetized. The eighth and ninth sections present upper and lower extremity blocks. Topics discussed include brachial and lumbosacral plexus anatomy and specific distal nerve blocks. The graphic for the obturator nerve was excellent.

The remaining two sections present epidural blocks and special blocks, including intercostal, suprascapular, stellate, celiac plexus, and lumbar sympathetic. The breadth of topics in these sections was good, but we were discouraged by the superficial discussion. A con-

sistent shortcoming is that the potential complications associated with the procedures are not discussed in the text or the interactive parts of the program.

A computer analyst assessed *Interactive Regional Anesthesia* as bug-ridden, slow, and difficult to use. The startup time was excessive compared to other multimedia CDs. Continual questions and messages occur on the screens concerning the computer's configuration and the monitor's resolution; this is not typical of this type of multimedia software. The CD-ROM continually said that the computer being used did not have a necessary 16-bit video driver, although it did. This CD performed erratically with pre-10/94 SoundBlaster 16 drivers; upgrading the driver improved but did not alleviate continual crashes of the system. Concurrent use of FaxWorks lead to General Protection Faults. At times during the use of this CD-ROM, sound was missing, forcing the operator to go into the MIDI settings and manually return the volume to a desired level.

This CD-ROM is a good tool to introduce the field of regional anesthesia but is unlikely to replace definitive texts or atlases of regional anesthesia. The individuals most likely to benefit from the program are junior residents in anesthesiology. However, at \$255, this CD-ROM may be beyond the reach of most residents in training. It may be a useful adjunct to the teaching tools in training programs. It contains excellent videos that would be greatly enhanced if narrations were included. It should include more interactive screens that would enable key ideas to be affirmed and potential complications to be addressed. Regional anesthesia is an exciting discipline growing in popularity, and *Interactive Regional Anesthesia* is an initial attempt at teaching it through a multimedia interface.

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**Obstetric Anesthesia: Principles and Practice.** Edited by David H. Chestnut. St. Louis, Mosby, 1994. Pages: 1,040. Price: \$125.00.

During the last 20 yr, the practice of obstetric anesthesia has undergone a noticeable metamorphosis. The main reason for this is the development of maternal-fetal medicine as a distinct discipline, which has enabled women with serious medical illnesses to have children. Anesthesiologists have become increasingly involved in the intrapartum medical as well as the anesthetic management of these women. In addition, several new techniques and drugs, notably neuraxial opioids, have been introduced for the routine management of labor pain and postoperative pain. Thus, the modern-day obstetric anesthesiologist is expected to possess a wide range of skills and knowledge for managing routine and high-risk situations in the labor ward.

## BOOK REVIEWS

This book will serve as a source of accurate and dependable information relating to obstetric anesthesia.

Chestnut is an experienced obstetric anesthesiologist who also is fully trained in obstetrics. It is, therefore, not surprising that many chapters contain authoritative information on relevant obstetric issues. There are approximately 62 contributors, which include anesthesiologists and obstetricians, primarily from North America. The book consists of 53 chapters grouped into 10 parts. Each part contains a set of related topics, such as anesthesia for labor and delivery, anesthesia for cesarean section, and anesthesia for obstetric complications. The chapters are extremely well organized. Each provides the reader with basic science background, relevant obstetric information, rationale for the approach suggested, and the techniques available, as well as their pros and cons. Several practical and clinical considerations are discussed, and key summary points are listed at the end of each chapter. This prevents the reader from becoming lost in the voluminous information and supporting experimental data offered. Several text boxes are included in many chapters, providing a quick review of the essential points. This feature is most valuable to busy clinicians. The book is amply illustrated with excellent diagrams. The bibliography is extensive and comprehensive, although somewhat overwhelming. It includes vintage citations from as far back as 1938 as well as more recent contributions.

In a multi-authored text book such as this, it is not unusual to find contradictions between authors. However, I was hard-pressed to find

any major contradictions in this work. This again reflects the editorial skill of Chestnut. Those chapters dealing with clinical aspects of obstetric anesthesia (17-28) were particularly helpful and enjoyable to read. As a practicing obstetric anesthesiologist, I was pleased to see timely chapters on human immunodeficiency virus, substance abuse, and medicolegal issues in the parturient. The chapter on the difficult airway (31) is well written, but the management algorithm is presented in two parts on pages 578 and 594. The average reader may find that navigating through the algorithms is more difficult than the actual management of the difficult airway. Although the sheer size (and price) of this book may intimidate a reader at first glance, he or she will soon notice that the information provided in each chapter is clinically relevant, useful, and very well organized.

*Obstetric Anesthesia: Principles and Practice* is recommended both as a basic book and as a reference text to anesthesiologists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, medical students, nursing students, and obstetricians at all levels of training.

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