

Book reviews

Fundamentals of Anaesthesia, 2nd ed., by Colin Pinnock, Ted Lin, and Tim Smith; Associate Editor, Robert Jones (Greenwich Medical Media, Greenwich, UK, 2003. 952 pp. \$57.50)

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The popularity of the “Fundamentals” can be surmised from the fact that this concise textbook of anesthesiology, incorporating basic science for safe clinical practice, has already been published in a second edition in 2003, after the first edition in 1999.

The book is divided into four sections: section 1, clinical anesthesia; section 2, physiology; section 3, pharmacology; and section 4, physics and clinical measurement. As the name “Fundamentals” implies, the book presents basic and fundamental knowledge necessary for the practice of anesthesiology. Section 1 (clinical anesthesia) occupies only about one-fifth of the book, and deals with the fundamentals of safe clinical practice, starting with assessment of the airway, and preparation of patients for anesthesia, and describing the preoperative conditions affecting the conduct of anesthesia. The chapter on induction of anesthesia describes problems with tracheal intubation, laryngeal mask airway, regurgitation, and upper airway obstruction. Although short, the clinical section contains discussions of the principles of resuscitation, the management of major trauma, the management of the unconscious patient, and special patient circumstances, such as pregnancy, the pediatric patient, patients with head injuries, and day-case patients. Regional anesthesia and the management of acute postoperative pain are also discussed in the clinical section.

The basic science sections (sections 2, 3, and 4) contain essential knowledge for the study of anesthesiology, described concisely but in detail. The physiology of each organ system is dealt with separately. In regard to the physiology of the nervous system, the fundamental concepts of chronic pain are discussed, and the assessment of chronic pain is briefly discussed in the section on measurement (section 4). At the end of the book, basic statistics are also presented.

The book is mainly intended for candidates sitting for the primary examinations for Fellow of the Royal College of Anaesthetists, and this second edition follows the syllabus for the primary FRCA examinations. The editors claim that a great deal of feedback from both examiners and candidates has been incorporated. Therefore, this will be a good guide, not only for anesthesiologists in training but also for teachers in other countries, to know the scope and depth of teaching in anesthesiology or anaesthetics in the British Isles.

The term, “Fundamentals” was also used by Ralph Waters (who in 1927 founded the first academic department of anesthesiology, at Madison, Wisconsin) for the book he prepared for the emergency training of anesthesiologists during the 1940s. The present book provides fundamental knowledge that is important in the safe practice of modern anesthesiology. It is a rare type of book, because in one volume one can obtain a wide range of real fundamental knowledge for anesthetic practice.

The text is beautifully printed, and the large number of clear figures and concise tables are accentuated in green, making these illustrations even more attractive to readers.

This is a useful book for trainees, to get clear ideas of what they are looking for quickly. It is also a very useful book to have in the operating room or other places where anesthesiologists are at work, such as the intensive care unit or pain treatment unit. Furthermore, for anesthesiologists in training in countries where medical education is not conducted in English, this is an especially good introduction to the anesthesiology literature written in English.