

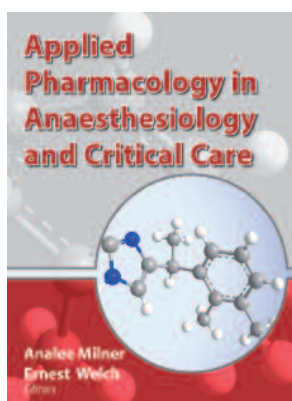
Book reviews

Applied Pharmacology in Anaesthesiology and Critical Care.

Analee Milner & Ernest Welch (Editors), Medpharm Publications, 750 pages.

ISBN: 978-0-620-53726-1.

Review by : A. VAN ZUNDERT



Anaesthetists provide care and safety during one of the most difficult moments in a patient's life: "undergoing surgery". Although each and every patient differs substantially, (e.g. in age; health; nutritional status; pathophysiology; surgical intervention), the anaesthetist

needs to have knowledge ready at hand, as it is not always possible to first look up in books, on the internet, or ask colleagues. Both anaesthesia and intensive care doctors are unique in that they have to combine knowledge of all kinds of surgery and medicine in all kinds of patients. These doctors need to know what type of drug has to be used; what the correct dose is; how to administer the drug; what the impact will be on the patient; the mechanism of action; what is to be expected in the short term; what the disadvantages are, side effects, allergic reactions and how to cope with them. This is a huge task and therefore anaesthetists often have a love-hate relationship with pharmacology as it is a complex undertaking that once administered is often difficult to reverse the situation. Use of an unfamiliar drug may evoke feelings of anxiety and the doctor needs clear instruction before administering such a drug. Therefore, in depth knowledge of pharmacology is very important and the specialist needs to thoroughly understand pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of drugs and their impact on the patient as a whole.

Who better to understand the problems anaesthetists face with pharmacology than one of their peers. As such Dr Analee Milner is well placed to write such a textbook as she obtained a Masters in Pharmacology besides her anaesthesia diploma.

Together with co-editor Dr Erni Welch they have accomplished an excellent task: bringing the crux of pharmacology to the user in an easy to read, logical fashion.

"Applied Pharmacology in Anaesthesiology and Critical Care" is a must for all involved in both disciplines. It is the timely publication of a most comprehensive pharmacology text book. Twenty nine authors, mostly from South Africa and authors from Australia (Prof. Royse) and New Zealand (Prof Shipton) produced 24 chapters, divided into basic knowledge (applied pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics and drug interactions relevant to anaesthesia) and more in depth knowledge of applied pharmacological subjects, even including an interesting chapter on pharmacogenetics and pharmacogenomics. Currently we are seeing more and more patients who as a result of inherited genetic variations, mutations and genetic disorders, do not react as expected. Therefore, to provide safe anaesthesia, the anaesthetist must possess knowledge of how and what to administer in such instances. The headings of the chapters in this text were selected to reflect anaesthetic and ICU topics, but drugs used on a chronic basis are also discussed in the context of their interactions seen in the operating theater or ICU. New in this book are chapters on the antiretroviral agents, recreational and neuropsychiatric drugs and even drugs used in alternative medicine, which are usually not found in classic pharmacology books. Attention has been paid to warn of drug interactions, an often difficult aspect of anaesthesia, where so many drugs are administered in a short period of time. When an allergic reaction does occur, it is not always obvious which

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drug caused the reaction. In a future edition I would love to see a few additions : Tables summarizing doses and providing a list of antidotes...

Many tips and clinical examples are provided throughout the text, which are appreciated by the reader. Boxes which highlight clear cut standpoints are provided just in case there is only minimal time available to look up certain aspects, but at the same

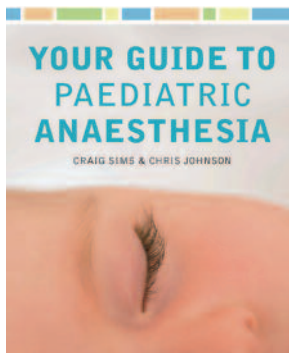
time providing much-needed information as fast as possible.

This book is a must for all those who are involved in care of the perioperative patient (deserving the best care), that only can provided by us, if we know what we're doing. Such in depth knowledge is only achieved if we read about and understand the drugs we're administering.

Your Guide to Paediatric Anaesthesia.

Craig Sims & Chris Johnson (Editors), McGraw Hill Australia Pty Limited, 390 pages.
ISBN 978-0-071-00022-2.

Review by : A. VAN ZUNDERT



Anaesthetists often have an odd feeling of insecurity when they have to deliver anaesthesia to prematures, babies and children overall. Unless they are specialized paediatric anaesthetists, more and more anaesthetists prefer to avoid taking responsibility for the care of our young patients.

Indeed, children differ in many respects from adults and they are for certainly not small copies of adults. Anatomy, physiology, pathology, and pharmacology all differ from adults and children need our meticulous attention to detail.

Craig Sims and Chris Johnson, both anaesthetists from the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children in Perth, Australia have to be complimented with their achievement of a new book in paediatric anaesthesia, that really reads as a guide that provides confidence to the user. One easily can learn the skills an anaesthetist has to master when dealing with children. Once confidence in his own skills has been reached, one should enjoy working with children and their parents to master all its unique aspects.

This new book provides useful information including key points, tips, clear illustrations and above all a structured text, providing a wealth of tips and tricks we all can benefit off. The manual starts with a list of 12 current issues in paediatric anaesthesia, and where to find them; followed by a

number of useful formulae, which we often tend to forget too easily; and finally a list of used abbreviations.

Twenty Australian college anaesthetists contributed nicely to this textbook, consisting of 31 well-written chapters. Each of these chapters covers a topic with substantial information on what every anaesthetist can apply in daily practice. Special attention has been paid to the fact that many of the drugs administered to children have a different action compared to adults, although they also differ according to the age of the child. Careful judgment is needed to administer the correct dose. Arithmetic errors or accidental use of the wrong solution strength is a horrendous experience for the administrator, and may be fatal for the recipient.

One of the chapters focuses on the new guidelines for resuscitation of children, while other chapters go in depth on several aspects of general and regional anaesthesia. Many illustrations and boxes highlight details, a clear cut standpoint, or are just an eye catcher if there is only minimal time available to look up certain aspects, but at the same time providing much-needed information as fast as possible. All techniques are accompanied with a concise discussion on their complications and how to solve the problem. Each chapter ends with a list of essential literature and pertinent review questions,

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which might be helpful in the preparation of Fellowship exams.

“Your guide to Paediatric Anaesthesia” does exactly what it sets out to do – that is to provide exact information on modern clinical anaesthesia to children, giving rapid access to comprehensive succinct knowledge from paediatric anaesthesia

experts. This book provides useful information for new trainees who have already gained knowledge about anaesthesia in adults. The more advanced anaesthesia provider will also find pertinent reviews, but it is ideal for anaesthetists who only occasionally work with children. The authors deserve our appreciation for their hard work.