

Book Reviews

Resuscitation in Pregnancy: A Practical Approach

P. Jevon, M. Raby

Books for Midwives: Oxford, UK, 2001, 122 pp; illustrated; indexed
ISBN: 0-7506-4457-5; Price £14.99

The title of this little book possibly understates its content. As stated in the Preface, it provides a comprehensive guide to resuscitation in pregnancy. The book is clearly and logically set out. It has the learning objectives clearly displayed in the modern bulleted format at the beginning of each chapter. As the Preface states, 'cardiopulmonary arrest in pregnancy is uncommon, occurring once in every 30 000 late pregnancies ... survival from such an event is exceptional'. This means many midwives in Europe, fortunately, will not witness such an event. However, if this book has been read and understood, it will be a great help if a cardiopulmonary arrest does happen. It should also help in prevention as there are many sections that clarify early recognition of potentially

dangerous situations leading to cardiopulmonary arrest. The book discusses causes of maternal death, physiological changes of pregnancy, management of the arrest through to the management of a death, including aspects pertaining to the patient, relatives and the law. Because of this wide perspective, *Resuscitation in Pregnancy* would also be of value to doctors embarking on a career in both obstetrics and obstetric anaesthesia. The text includes useful UK addresses for reporting events, locating resuscitation courses and other relevant information.

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Critical Care Focus, 7: Nutritional Issues

Helen F. Galley (ed)

BMJ Books: London, UK, 2002, 70 pp; illustrated; indexed
ISBN: 0-7279-1652-1; Price £14.95

The philosophy underlying the 'Critical Care Focus' series is to provide readers with topical and evidence-based overviews of key areas of intensive care. Each chapter is written by an expert in the field and based on a lecture delivered to the Intensive Care Society.

This volume attempts to address some of the controversies related to feeding in critically ill patients. The scene is set in the first chapter, where the importance of providing adequate nutrition is argued. The rest of the book builds on this information. Data are presented showing that malnutrition and low body mass index are independent predictors of mortality. The notion of mimicking physiological feeding is addressed; enteral feeding given intermittently rather than continuously. Parenteral nutrition is shown to be preferable to no nutrition, and in certain circumstances, such as head injuries, may offer advantages

over enteral feeding. Important debates are confronted, including when to start feeding, how much to feed and how to avoid complications related to feeding. The latter sections are somewhat more controversial in that they cover such topics as immunonutrition, glutamine supplementation and micronutrients. To some extent, where evidence remains equivocal, the bias of the contributors is reflected. Overall, this book offers a topical and wide-ranging overview of nutritional issues. Not all intensivists would agree with the emphases and recommendations. However, this is healthy and will inspire debate and further research.

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Critical Care Focus, 8: Blood and Blood Transfusion

Helen F. Galley (ed)

BMJ Books: London, UK, 2002, 85 pp; illustrated; indexed
ISBN: 0-7279-1657-2; Price £14.95

Early on, the reader is provoked by the assertion that 'transfusion practice is a good example of how some patterns of treatment in critical care have been set prematurely without proper...evidence'. A well-conducted prospective multicentre study (TRICC Trial) showed that mortality may be increased if the traditional transfusion practice – targeting haemoglobin of 12 g dL^{-1} – is followed. This sets the tone of the book, to challenge preconceptions and encourage us to question other established treatments. The book goes on to examine why blood transfusion may be hazardous, and how the risks may be modified, such as through filtration. Bleeding and clotting tendencies are discussed, and several complicated topics

are covered clearly and comprehensively. A whole chapter is devoted to activated protein C, which is appropriate in view of the current high interest among intensivists. The recent multicentre study is well summarized, but perhaps some of the criticisms could have been presented. Other important subjects, including transfusion-related acute lung injury, the indications for colloids (are there any?) and blood substitutes, are presented. Overall, this volume is interesting and well conceived. I enjoyed reading it.

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Critical Care Focus, 9: The Gut

Helen F. Galley (ed)

BMJ Books: London, UK, 2002, 92 pp; illustrated; indexed
ISBN: 0-7279-1679-3; Price £14.95

This volume deals with the interrelationship between critical illness and the gut, an organ system whose function is frequently deranged. The book begins with a well-written chapter on gut dysfunction and enteral feeding. A strong argument is presented for adopting feeding protocols on intensive care units. Diarrhoea, an important problem for intensive care patients, is discussed. Preventive and treatment strategies are suggested. There is interesting discussion about selective decontamination of the digestive tract, an intervention that has vociferous proponents and detractors. Overall, a balanced view is presented. Both ischaemia and reperfusion are described in the

pathogenesis of gut injury. The reader is offered practical advice on the medical management of upper gastrointestinal bleeding. The book concludes with a chapter on pancreatitis, which is of tremendous importance to intensivists. Diagnosis, local complications, inflammatory mediators and effects on other organs, such as the lungs, are discussed. Overall, the volume is a welcome addition to the series. The insights and practical suggestions provided throughout are particularly helpful.

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A Practical Approach to Cardiac Anesthesia, 3rd edition

F. A. Hensley Jr, D. E. Martin, G. P. Gravlee (eds)

Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins: Philadelphia, USA, 2002, 733 pp; indexed, illustrated
ISBN 0-7817-3444-4; Price £50.00 (pbk)

The preface to this new edition highlights the changes that have taken place in cardiac anaesthesia and surgery since the last edition of 1995, as this subspecialty continues to evolve. Particularly featured

are discussions of fast-track recovery after surgery, the differing requirements of off-pump coronary artery bypass grafting and, probably most welcome of all, a chapter on transoesophageal echocardiography.

The latter chapter is very good, with a useful description of the underlying physics, clear diagrams and valuable advice.

A multi-author work – this has fifty-five contributors – inevitably carries variations of emphasis and inconsistencies in its text. However, the editors have produced a remarkably consistent overall appearance, with key points in bold type and a clear page layout. The index is good and the coverage within the text near comprehensive for the cardiothoracic anaesthetist/anesthesiologist. There is perhaps a slightly artificial distinction between routine and emergency cases, while the sectional layout (Anesthetic Management for Cardiac Surgery, Anesthetic Management of Specific Cardiac Disorders, Circulatory Support and Organ Preservation) leads to some duplication and a need to refer back and forth, if specific advice is sought. However, many of the chapters are excellent, with clear, if didactic, instruction for the trainee, as well as help for the established practitioner.

For the European reader, availability and nomenclature of drugs may be an issue, and some areas of

discussion, such as socio-economic and historical facets may be interesting, but their value in a daily reference book may be questioned. There is perhaps a case to be made for a two-volume work, the first covering theory, history, physics and anatomy; the second a small, practical pocket reference book.

No textbook can be perfect. Problems for this reader with *A Practical Approach to Cardiac Anesthesia* include the size of many of the diagrams. While some are excellent, others, including many flow charts and some practical illustrations (e.g. Figs 3–10, internal jugular vein cannulation), are so small as to be confusing. This is made more so by the exclusive use of monochrome line drawings. While this may have arisen from a need to keep size and costs under control, the editors claim that this book is pocket sized, certainly finds no favour with the reviewer's tailor. If the cost of the book is suitable to the reader's pocket, however, the reviewer would recommend it strongly.

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8th Annual Toronto Critical Care Medicine Symposium

October 30–November 1, 2003

The Metro Toronto Convention Centre

Symposium Chair: Dr. Brian Kavanagh
Scientific Committee Chair: Dr. John Granton

This 3-day symposium focuses on topics relevant to individuals involved in the care of critically ill patients. Thematic/plenary sessions provided by leaders in critical care as well as small group sessions and state-of-the-art reviews are featured. The opportunity for interaction with faculty is a priority of the meeting.

Information and registration:

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