CORRESPONDENCE

D. Humphrey, M.B.B.S., D.A.
Lecturer
Department of Physiology
University of Natal
P.O. Box 17039
Congella 4013
Natal, Republic of South Africa

Rebreathing and the Bain Circuit. II.

To the Editor.—The original article¹ and subsequent correspondence²,³ on carbon dioxide tensions in inspired anaesthetic gases prompt me to ask what the presently accepted level of carbon dioxide is in fresh air.

According to my copy of the Handbook of Chemistry and Physics,⁴ dry atmospheric air contains 0.033 ± 0.001% of carbon dioxide by volume. (PCO₂ 0.25 mm STPD). However, popular press reports on the “green-house effect” suggest that this level is rising.

It would seem logical to consider any concentration of carbon dioxide in the inhaled atmosphere which is in excess of that in fresh air to be unphysiological, and to constitute a threat to the homeostasis of the patient’s milieu intérieur.

Is the presently available monitoring equipment as sensitive and as accurate as the human respiratory centre? Would our patients not be safer if we used non-rebreathing techniques to avoid altogether the potential hazard of re-breathing carbon dioxide?

REFERENCES


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A Simplified Method of External Jugular Vein Cannulation

To the Editor.—We currently use a simple technique for cannulating the external jugular vein (EJV) for central pressure monitoring that obviates the need for a “skin nick” with a #11 scalpel blade, hence the risk of lacerating the EJV.

The technique is as follows: the EJV is cannulated with an 18 g or 16 g Medicut® catheter over needle that has a stiff and widely tapering hub on the catheter. Once the vein has been identified, the catheter can be advanced with firm pressure and a slight twisting motion, using the

References


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Dr. C. Stanley Jones
P.O. Box 569
314 Samian Building
Stockenstrom Street
Worcester, CA 8630
Republic of South Africa