BOOK REVIEW

Edward Lowenstein, M.D., Editor


Drugs and Anesthesia is organized into four major sections. The first discusses general principles of pharmacology and pharmacokinetics. Although the information contained will constitute review for a clinical pharmacologist, I suspect a majority of anesthetists will find this portion of the book difficult. Less information and more complete explanations would provide the necessary framework for later chapters, with less trauma to the reader.

Readable compendiums of the pharmacology of drugs used by anesthesiologists are presented in the second section of the book. Because this information is fundamental to the practice of anesthesia, the anesthesiologist in training will find this the most useful portion. Unfortunately, discussion of the new synthetic narcotics, alfentanil and sufentanil, and also the new intermediate duration nondepolarizing relaxants, vecuronium and atracurium, is omitted. This is a major oversight, since these drugs will be released for clinical use in the near future.

The last two sections of the book discuss cardiovascular and general therapeutics. They describe the pharmacology of drugs an anesthesiologist is likely to encounter. The chapters on antiarrhythmics, calcium antagonists, prostaglandins, and histamine antagonists are particularly useful because newer therapeutic drugs are discussed. The remaining chapters in this section serve to review other aspects of pharmacology.

This book succeeds in filling a void in the current reference literature for both the training and practicing anesthesiologist. The text is largely readable and evenly written, the latter likely a result of the co-editors authoring or co-authoring three-quarters of the 24 chapters. The references at the end of each chapter are both appropriate and current.

A book of this magnitude always will have deficiencies. In this case they are mostly minor. This volume presents relevant factual and clinical information not elsewhere available in a single text. The co-editors have fulfilled their goal of providing both a teaching text and a reference source.

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