This monograph would be of interest and value to anyone engaged in investigative work in this field.

William E. Adams, M.D.


This volume introduces a new subscription series. It is intended to present the clinician with “practical, authoritative advice (while it is still fresh) that he can promptly put to use in his own practice.” Each volume is to be concerned with both basic science and clinical topics presented by authorities, here and abroad, to make the series reflect an international view of anesthesia practice.

The editor states, “This symposium has been compiled with the intent to supplement rather than duplicate existing texts on pediatric anesthesia . . . only those topics thought to have special current importance have been chosen.” When measured against the stated purposes, both editor and publisher have achieved only indifferent success.

Two chapters do meet the above criteria. A well-written, informative chapter on “Roentgen Features of Respiratory Distress in Infants” is a delight to read. Pneumonia, pneumothorax, and pneumomediastinum are well illustrated and discussed. Because the authors have not been able to demonstrate roentgenographic evidence of tracheal obstruction by an enlarged thymus gland, they discard this convenient “waste basket” for respiratory deaths.

The chapter on tracheostomy is timely, and the practices presented are supported by analysis of 156 tracheostomies performed over the last three years. The importance of infection in mortality and morbidity associated with this operation is stressed. A detailed description of the technique used in caring for tracheostomy in children would have enhanced the discussion.

The symposium suffers from lack of unity and from mediocre writing. Different authors present opposing views on the same subject. Conflicting statements appear concerning use of cuffed endotracheal tubes, use of atropine versus scopolamine and dosages required in nasotracheal intubation, and on respiratory and cardiovascular effects of halothane. Mature readers will discover and evaluate these discrepancies; beginners seeking guidance will be confused.

Although informative, the chapters on pulmonary hypertension, ventilatory status, fluid and electrolyte therapy and transfusion therapy are difficult reading. They contain little that has not appeared elsewhere in a more easily digestible form.

The controversy concerning the use of endotracheal tubes in children—always, never, or sometimes—is presented and discussed. Throughout the text all contributory authors are not in agreement. The discussion of the pediatric airway will be of interest to the beginner.

Anesthesia for tonsillectomy is superficially treated, and conveys little of the grave danger often surrounding this operation. No definitive view is presented on the use of muscle relaxants in children, even though much controversy currently surrounds this problem. The chapter on hypothermia has little reference to its use in children. These defects do not help the symposium measure up to its proposed current usefulness.

The index is poorly compiled with many text references omitted. For example, these subjects are discussed in the text but not mentioned in the index: Brevital, ether, pentothal, rectal anesthesia, tonsillectomy, nitrous oxide and chloroform. Both halothane and Fluothane are indexed but without cross reference to indicate that they are the same agent. According to the index, cyclopropane and halothane are the only anesthetics discussed that are worthy of listing for reference.

The volume is well bound and printed in easily read type. The format is pleasant and illustrations are of excellent quality. This text will have little usefulness for the experienced anesthetist and will often confuse the beginner.

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