Book review

Basics of Anesthesia, Manuel C. Pardo Jr., Ronald D. Miller (Eds.), seventh ed.. , ELSEVIER Inc., Philadelphia, PA (2018). p. 914 pp ISBN: 978-0-323-40115-9

Basics of Anesthesia, as edited by M. Pardo and R. Miller, is now the 7th edition of this textbook. It was first published in 1984 and has been revised every 5–7 years. Compared to the previous edition the content of this book was adapted and four chapters were added ("Anesthetic Neurotoxicity", "Palliative Care", "Sleep Medicine and Anesthesia", "New Models of Anesthesia Care: Perioperative Medicine, the Perioperative Surgical Home, and Population Health"). Full online access to the content is available, which is very useful when you are studying or reading on the commute and if you use the book as a reference you will find specific topics quicker.

The book is divided into six sections, organized in a logical order. It begins with a broad overview of the field of anesthesiology, followed by the section on basic pharmacology and physiology. The next section is on preoperative preparation and general intraoperative management. As already expected by reading the title, almost half of the book covers the basics of an anesthesiologist's responsibility. The following sections describe special anesthetic considerations to provide anesthetic care for the different surgical specialties, a brief chapter about the recovery period and lastly some points about practicing anesthesiology as a consultant. The last section is about special fields, where the anestesiologist's expertise is often paramount: e.g. intensive care, trauma care, pain management and others.

One of the most important requirements a textbook has to fulfill, is good comprehensive writing. This is definitely true for this book. Another plus is a brief introduction about the content at the beginning of most of the chapters. The chapters end with a brief summary and "questions of the day" which are helpful to check if you understood the topic and most important points. In every chapter you will find boxes summarizing key facts.

Another positive point is that each chapter stands alone. This means you can start reading the book at which ever point you like. This makes it a good book for reference for beginners as well as for residents in an advanced stage of their training looking to revise some basics (especially (patho-)physiology or pharmacology). All the abbreviations used, are explained the first time they appear and the authors define exactly what they mean. Unfortunately if you miss one you have to search the index for the abbreviation which is impractical and confusing. In my opinion a separate list of abbreviations would be more useful as is common practice in scientific literature.

There are a few special points about this book I would like to highlight: In this edition the editors removed the chapter about the history of anesthesiology. Nowadays anesthesiology has become a speciality requiring very broad knowledge. As a beginner in anesthesiology it is fundamentally importance to know how to care for a patient throughout anesthesia safely and let recover afterwards without experiencing major critical incidents. On the other hand they added a chapter specifically about patient positioning and the associated risks of the different positions needed for specific surgeries which in other books seem to be merely a detail. Although positioning is usually the surgeon's responsibility, it is clear, that the anesthesiologist is also responsible for the wellbeing of the patient during the procedure - which is why this chapter is important. The technique of peripheral nerve blocks is focused around ultrasound guided techniques which should be standard practice in developed countries today, as there is good evidence for ultrasound guided regional anesthesia increasing patient safety [1]. Unfortunately only few anatomical cross sectional images explain the sonographic views (yet the figures shown in the book are of high quality and helpful to understand the block technique).

A minor change would be helpful for European readers: several laboratory values are displayed in Imperial units and in my opinion it would be nice to have the respective International System conversion. Some topics are far beyond *basic* knowledge of an anesthesiologist such as anesthesia for children with congenital heart disease. Nevertheless, this chapter is well explained and interesting to read. I had some issues with the online version of the book. First, online access is only possible by downloading and installing an application on your tablet or smartphone. If you accidentally close the app while reading, you will get redirected to the beginning of the chapter when opening the book the next time. The same happens when you open a figure and would like to return to the text afterwards.

In conclusion this is a well written, comprehensive book that provides extensive knowledge on the basics of anesthesia that every trainee should know. I can recommend this textbook to anesthesiologists at the beginning of their training for learning the essentials. The book gives you an overview at the beginning of your career and is helpful to review the basics in a more advanced phase of training. The textbook is also the basis for preparing exams with Miller's Anesthesia Review [2], an additional questions-and-answers practice book, with easy to find cross-references.

More detailed knowledge (particularly regarding intraoperative management) is beyond the content of this "basic" book.

References

[1] M.J. Barrington, Y. Uda, Did ultrasound fulfil the promise of safety in regional anesthesia? Current Opinion in Anesthesiology 31 (5) (October 2018) p649–p655.
[2] L. Sdrales, R. Miller, Miller's Anesthesia Review, third ed., Elsevier, September 2017.

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