Book and Multimedia Reviews


The author’s goal of providing a complete summary of all that is known about the LMA and competing devices plus offering practical guidelines to their use is admirably accomplished. While one could quibble about a 699-page letter-size format monographic book being concise, the many innovative features of the text help to make it so.

Like many monographs, the author begins with a historically oriented chapter, including an interesting brief biography of the inventor and developer, Archie Brain, who was born in Japan during WWII while his father was British Consul in Kobe. Much like how Thomas Edison described his technique for invention, the development of the LMA was 1% inspiration in 1981 plus later insights and 99% perspiration over the next 10 plus years. Unlike Edison who had many coworkers, the LMA was initially developed by one working anesthesiologist developing several hundred prototypes in a small workshop and initially testing them on his own patients. Comparing the situation 25 years ago with today’s highly regulated research environment, one comes to the same conclusion as Dr. Brain in the foreword: it would be much harder today!

The remaining 21 chapters cover a wide variety of issues pertaining to the LMA. The second chapter reviews the variations of the classic LMA and the multitude of adjuvant devices used with them. Chapters 5–9 review the anatomy, pathophysiology, and use of the LMA as a conduit to both the airway and gastrointestinal tracts. Chapters 7–10 review the clinical application in anesthesia practice from pre-anesthesia, insertion, maintenance, to the emergence phase of anesthesia. Chapters 11–15 cover special aspects of use in resuscitation, intensive care, difficult airway management, pediatrics, and patients with coexisting diseases. The pediatric chapter recapitulates the chapters of the book regarding the pediatric patient. Chapter 16 discusses specifics for the use of the LMA in procedures for different surgical subspecialties. Chapters 17–19 review the use of the special variations of the standard LMA, the flexible LMA for shared airway use, the intubating LMA and the ProSeal LMA. Chapter 20 provides information for the educational aspects of LMA use, and Chapter 21 includes highly useful information on the problems that may be encountered during LMA use. With an estimated clinical usage in 150 million procedures resulting in a plethora of similar devices to tap into the large market, the final chapter reviews a myriad of literature regarding other extraglottic airway devices, including clinical comparisons with the LMA.

Throughout the chapters are a great number of diagrams, pictures, and tables, both original and referenced, that are of uniformly excellent quality and large in size. The chapters regarding insertion, maintenance, difficult airway management, specialty surgical considerations, and problems in use are particularly pertinent for the clinical anesthesia user of the LMA. Information requiring hours of Web searching can be found in minutes in these chapters.

In addition to creating the definitive book regarding the LMA with 5,891 references from 4,299 researchers, the author may have produced a prototype for print media textbooks in the computer age. The author describes the computer aided methods used for its creation in the introduction. Meta-analysis of all available data was performed whenever more than three studies relevant to a particular issue were available. Unlike most published meta-analysis evaluations in peer-reviewed journals, the author chose to also include data from all sources, including abstracts of scientific meetings and letters to the editor. The meta-analytical findings for each chapter, placed after the text of the chapter summary in a lavender table format, are a compact summary of pertinent clinical research.

For the busy clinician, several useful features are available to speed-finding information without resorting to searching an index at the end of the book. Each chapter begins with a table of contents. The author’s conclusions of the information in most subheadings are included in bold print at the end of the subheading, allowing rapid reading of the pertinent information. At the end of each chapter are quick references in blue table format summarizing the chapter even more concisely. Whenever there are more than five studies regarding an issue, the information is presented in a tan-colored table rather than in text. Within the headings or text are “links” pointing to other locations where the bulk of information about a subject is logically placed (much like pointers in computer texts that would allow the book to be easily converted to computer-readable format) to reduce the redundancy found in many texts, especially those by multiple authors. Two appendices were added after going to press with the latest references arranged according to chapter and headings, making the book as current as possible.

In summary, the dogged effort involved in creating this book (estimated by the author at 13,000 hours) rivals that of Dr. Archie Brain in inventing and developing its subject, the LMA. The effort shows in the results.

Kenneth A. Haselby, MD
Associate Professor
Director of Anesthesia, Wishard Hospital
Indiana University School of Medicine
Indianapolis, IN
khaselby@iupui.edu


With the widely available and easy access to the Internet and World Wide Web, the development of a site for the communication and education of peers in a given field is an attractive possibility. The authors of the site LiTAC have developed a Web site aimed at anesthesiologists and intensivists who are involved in the care of patients receiving liver transplants. The site is well laid out, easy to access, and authored by an impressive group of well known authorities in the world of liver transplantation from many different centers in several countries.

The first tab on the menu after the home page is a link to the latest articles. This is an extensive page where recent articles appear quite complete and representative of the current literature, although this reviewer would prefer to see a small notation stating the actual date when the page was last updated. There is also an excellent resource for recent lectures and slides. For those who cannot attend all the meetings, this is superb.

Links to meetings were good and complete. The site is obviously well maintained. (There is nothing more frustrating and irritating than seeing multiple years-old links on a Web site!) The source for calculating MELD (Model for End-stage Liver Disease) and Child Pugh (a calculated score to evaluate prognosis in cirrhosis) in a “plug in the numbers” format is an especially welcome feature.

In summary, the authors have put great effort into conceiving, creating, and maintaining this Web site. It has the potential to be a significant resource for liver transplant anesthesiologists. However, the site needs to be advertised to the transplant community and
searchable through widely used search engines. The hardest thing for the editors will be the ongoing maintenance with up-to-date articles and lectures. This is a time-consuming process and not always recognized as an “academic” pursuit.

Rebecca Barnett, MD
Department of Anesthesia
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA
barnett@ophs.upenn.edu

Anesthesia and Uncommon Diseases, 5th ed.

This review takes a slightly different approach by providing a bispectral commentary on this classic text, now under new editorship, and provides the perspective of a clean-shaven anesthesiologist in-training with the insights of a gray-bearded, senior practitioner. Lee Fleisher, the Robert D. Dripps Professor and Chair at the University of Pennsylvania, takes over the editorial reins from Dr. Jonathan Benumof, Professor, at the University of California, San Diego. Indeed, the mantle of editorial guidance has been safely transferred. Going from front cover to back, the book weighs in at 3 pounds, 12 ounces (1.7 kg) and measures 11.25 × 8.75 × 1.3 inches (29 × 22 × 3.3 cm), therefore not classifiable as a pocket reference. The print is large enough for the senior reviewer to read and both commentators appreciate the content outline at the beginning of each chapter and the host of illustrations. The book is logically formatted, indexed, and enhanced by an expanded version.

Dr. Fleisher has drawn on the expert opinion of 45 authors from 21 centers to provide 21 chapters of guidance. There are 12 system-based chapters complemented by specialized coverage of obesity (clearly not an uncommon disease today), nutritional abnormalities, impact of herbal therapies, and a new chapter on mitochondrial pathologies. Additional chapters focus on the special needs of the parturient, child, and the elderly, as well as trauma and burn patients and those with infectious diseases or bioterrorist exposure. The systems-based chapters for the most part start with useful background information on classification and diagnosis followed by specific anesthetic guidance and perioperative priorities. Interestingly, there is often far more background for specific pathology than there is unique anesthetic management direction. The text is fairly consistently edited, which facilitates reading it from cover-to-cover, an approach not likely to be pursued routinely, however. Chapters are exhaustively referenced, ranging in number from 44–434 references, with an average of 160 and a mean of 239 references per chapter, a bit surprising for such a modest-sized text.

The newly included chapter on “The Pediatric Patient” does a solid job (the discussion on craniofacial anesthesia is outstanding) of covering a very broad field that previously received its own textbook on uncommon diseases (1). The chapter on “Uncommon Cardiac Disease” is particularly outstanding. Discussion of ischemic heart disease is limited only to less common presentations such as coronary vasospasm, vasculidelities, and dissection. Lists of inflammatory and noninflammatory cardiomyopathies are exhaustive. So too are discussions of valvular and endocardial vegetations and tumors. Finally, the immunosuppressed and de-innervated heart in patients with AIDS or after cardiac transplant are each presented with pertinent anesthetic implications.

The 5th edition provides state-of-the-art care of common diseases like diabetes within the confines of less common aspects of the disorder. In the chapter on “Diseases of the Endocrine Patient,” there is a fine discussion of rather routinely encountered patients with abnormalities of the parathyroids, thyroid, pituitary, adrenal, and pancreatic glands, although we were struck by the absence of discussion of carcinoid syndrome here or elsewhere in the text. Although diabetes is overwhelmingly the most common endocrinopathy, the authors include a noteworthy discussion on perioperative care of diabetic patients who all too frequently have secondary compromise of multiple organs. They also include timely comments on the rationale for glucose control, reasonable perioperative glycemic control goals, and techniques to achieve these end-points.

Because this text provides expert opinion on a wide variety of topics, one is bound to find advice with which one disagrees. The endocrine chapter provides guidelines for steroid supplementation that are more liberal than we routinely pursue. We do not regularly provide stress doses to perioperative patients who receive daily doses of inhaled corticosteroids. We also have concerns as do others about the often underrecognized perioperative entity referred to as “relative” adrenal insufficiency (2–4).

It was interesting to note that the chapter on “Pregnancy and Complications of Pregnancy” did not include comment on the uncommon entity of acute fatty liver of pregnancy reported to occur in 1:15,000 pregnancies. However, this is discussed in the comprehensive chapter on “Liver Disease.” The text also does not index hemolytic uremic syndrome in either the “Hematology” or “Pregnancy and Complications of Pregnancy” chapters. The closely related entity, thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura, however, is discussed in both.

We suggest a few changes in future editions, including a CD to accompany the book so that one could carry it around more easily. In addition, an online update on topics such as infectious diseases and bioterrorism would be helpful, especially with emerging diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and avian flu.

The textbook, formerly known as Katz and Kadis, Katz, Benumof, and Kadis, and then Benumof, has now evolved into a broader reference that includes an overview of pediatrics, nutritional, and mitochondrial pathologies. It is concise, easy to navigate, and exhaustively referenced. The book covers some fairly common pathologies, which may be beneficial depending on the reader’s access to additional resources. The inclusion of a CD-Rom/PDA compressible version of the text in future additions will promote the book’s accessibility. In closing, we have added Fleisher’s Anesthesia and Uncommon Diseases to our libraries and recommend it to others as well.

Adam J. Cambray, MD
Resident
Department of Anesthesiology
Douglas B. Coursin, MD
Professor
Departments of Anesthesiology and Medicine
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health
Madison, WI
dcoursis@uwisc.edu

References