Core topics in Cardiothoracic Critical Care, 1st edition


The book ‘Core Topics in Cardiothoracic Critical Care’ is a timely publication about cardiothoracic intensive care. It is edited by the dynamic trio from Cambridge - Andrew Klein, Alain Vuylsteke, and Samer A M Nashef! The speciality of cardiothoracic critical care is yet to be recognised and the first step in this direction is a book like this.

This book consists of various chapters covering systems such as respiratory, cardiovascular, etc. followed by sections specific to surgery, discharge of postoperative patients, structure and organisation of intensive care units (ICUs) and finally medicolegal and ethical issues involved in the ICUs. The various contributors of the book are well-known specialists in the fields of anaesthesia, cardiology, cardiac surgery, intensive care, architecture, pharmacy, physiotherapy, nursing, and engineering; it is needless to say the excellent outcome due to the contribution of these experts. In my opinion, it is a good idea to involve specialists from different parts of the globe, which gives a global perspective to this important topic.

In the chapter on scoring systems, details of various scores could have been included with sensitivity and specificity; the readers may benefit from these. The chapters on point of care and radiology are good additions to the literature. The chapter on evidence-based design of cardiothoracic critical care, written by an architect, is very nice with proper floor plans. In the future editions of the book, the authors should include Joint Commission International and European guidelines for ICU design.

The chapter on weaning is good but weaning indices could have been described in detail.

The section on nephrology is well-written with nice diagrams and clear indications for various types of dialysis. A mention about minitracheostomy (cricothyrotomy) for tracheal toileting may complete Chapter 9 on tracheostomy. It is nice to see the chapter on minimally invasive CO (Chapter 13) as its role in ICU is increasingly perceived by the intensivists; the chapter would have been complete if plethysmographic CO and Flotrac had been mentioned.

Generally, cardiac intensivists lack in-depth knowledge about gastrointestinal system. The chapter on gastrointestinal system is timely, and hopefully may abolish the gray zone in the knowledge of cardiac intensivists!

Chapter 44 (sedation and analgesia) should mention techniques to diagnose, manage and prevent epidural haematoma. Other regional techniques like paravertebral block, interpleural and intercostal block, lumbar epidural or sternal catheters deserve a mention.

Printing and illustration are of very good quality. The paper quality and the cover design are excellent. Editors have planned the sections very well and the editing is top class!

The attractive point of the book is its simplicity despite the wide spectrum of subjects that it covers. Most of the chapters are 3-4 pages and are easily readable amidst the busy schedule of the intensive care work. It is not a hierarchy-specific book - it is not very heavy to read or meant only for consultants. I would recommend this book for every cardiac critical care intensivist. I would encourage all medical personnel involved in patient care such as residents, consultants, nurses, and physiotherapists to go through it at least once.

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