

Books

Respiratory Support

By Keith Sykes. Principles and Practice Series: Series Editors C. E. W. Hahn and A. P. Adams. Pp. x + 238. Illustrated. £24,95. London: BMJ. 1995. ISBN 0-7279-0830-8.

Rapid advances in respiratory support are ensuring that textbooks on this subject are soon out of date.

Nevertheless, the basic principles underlying the methods used to provide what is internationally accepted and useful in invasive and non-invasive respiratory support need to be communicated. Furthermore, international experience over the last few years has demonstrated how pulmonary trauma can be caused by inappropriate mechanical ventilation.

This soft-cover review of the current practice of appropriate respiratory support is not controversial; it describes in an easily readable and concise fashion the development, physiological implications, mechanical and technological basis, safety aspects and careful application of current respiratory support.

I did not like the section on compliance and resistance in the chapter entitled 'Physiological background to mechanical ventilation', but I did particularly like the section on dead-space ventilation in the same chapter.

The author, with obvious insight, refrained from including a chapter on new 'modes' of ventilation, which would only have resulted in the book being out of date sooner rather than later. However, all the latest techniques in ventilatory support are appropriately discussed in terms of their correct application to provide various forms of optimal respiratory support.

The book is a good size and weight for relaxed armchair reading and is entertaining in parts, thereby retaining the reader's attention. It contains good tables and clear illustrations. It is highly recommended for doctors, nurses and technologists training in the practice of intensive care, and is also an appropriate update for those who have not followed the literature on respiratory support in the last few years.

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