

Echocardiography at hand

Pocket guide to perioperative and critical care echocardiography. Colin Royse, Garry Donnan, Alistair Royse. Sydney: McGraw-Hill, 2006 (ix + 218 pp + mini-CD-ROM, \$44.95). ISBN 0074714996.

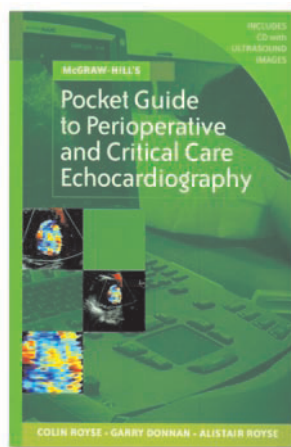
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS a soft-covered guide to echocardiography and comes with a mini-CD demonstrating many of the video images and pathology described.

Over the past 5 to 10 years, the use of ultrasonography and echocardiography outside of cardiology, obstetrics and radiology has increased dramatically. This has been partly fuelled by the availability of small, powerful and relatively cheap ultrasound machines that produce images as good as high-powered machines from just a few years ago.

Anaesthetists, intensivists, and emergency physicians in particular now routinely perform echocardiography on patients for both diagnostic and monitoring reasons.

Parallel to this development has been the explosion in courses, workshops and books pitched at budding echocardiographers. The editors and authors of this book, predominantly anaesthetists and loosely based at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, are at the forefront of teaching in this field.

The book is a multi-author guide to transthoracic and transoesophageal echocardiography and, despite the title, contains



very good chapters on regional anaesthetic blocks and vascular access. The chapters on physics, equipment, and anatomy — usually the stumbling block in many books on this subject — are reasonable and interesting. The rest of the text is well written and clear, with neat diagrams.

Each chapter begins with a table of learning objectives, which I personally find redundant, but some may find useful. The mini-CD has many high quality images linked to the text and has become an essential accessory for echocardiography textbooks. This one is better than most but, unfortunately, will not play in trayless CD drives typical of most new laptops.

Overall, this book strikes a good balance between detail and brevity and would be most appropriate for anaesthetic trainees and junior consultants with an interest in this area. The potential audience, however, is enormous, and the day when doctors discard their stethoscopes and take up their portable echo-machine for routine cardiac examination is probably not far away.

Chris J Cokis

Anaesthetist

Royal Perth Hospital, Perth, WA