Continuing Medical Education Book Reviews

Clinical Cardiac Pacing

By Kenneth A. Ellenbogen, G. Neal Kay, and Bruce L. Wilkoff

W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia (1995)
838 pages, illustrated, $165.00
ISBN: 9-7216-5462-2

This is a multiauthored textbook on clinical cardiac pacing. Basic and clinical knowledge as well as relevant engineering and technical information are provided by 80 renowned experts from medical centers and the pacemaker industry. This cooperative contribution by clinicians and industry scientists reflects the fact that the rapid development of the technology and growth of clinical applications of cardiac pacing are the result of the joint effort of these two groups of fighters on the same frontier.

The content of this book is really comprehensive. In a sense, it is an encyclopedia of the modern science and state-of-the-art of cardiac pacing. Every known aspect of this vast and rapidly developing interdisciplinary field is covered. The body of the text is divided into five sections and presented in 42 chapters. All the chapters are uniformly well written by outstanding experts in their respective areas. All topics of practical interest, especially those on bradycardias, are thoroughly discussed with materials that the authors have developed over their careers. The first section introduces the basic concepts of cardiac pacing in six chapters. The complex biophysical aspects of myocardial stimulation and sensing, the pacing leads, pulse generator, power source of a pacing system, and programmers for pacemakers are presented. In Section 2, the various artificial rate-adaptive sensors are described and their clinical relevance emphasized. Section 3 details the clinical concepts of cardiac pacing. In its 14 chapters, pacemaker implantations in patients with different underlying diseases, complications and their managements, and generator changes are discussed. The last chapter in this section is on pacemaker radiography. Lead positioning and malpositioning, other lead problems, and pacemaker identification by roentgenography are excellently presented with 80 roentgenograms of perfect quality. Section 4 is an introduction to pacemaker electrocardiography. Examples and diagrammatic presentations are very helpful for the reader to understand the relatively complicated pacemaker timing cycles, operational characteristics, and malfunctions. In section 5, which addresses related issues, the applications of pacemakers in special situations, including antitachycardia pacing, pacemaker-defibrillator interactions, and interference in pacemakers are delineated. It is worth mentioning that a chapter entitled "Pacing: FDA and Regulatory Environment" is included and, in fact, an expert from the FDA is a coauthor. The information in this chapter, which would be difficult to find elsewhere, is valuable for manufacturers, industry scientists, and administrators, as well as for physicians. Besides the up-to-date information in the text, this book is well illustrated and extensively referenced. Readers of any level will find avenues for furthering their knowledge of any specific topic.

It is obvious that this book is directed mainly to the traditional and major aspect of cardiac pacing—pacing for bradycardias—although two chapters of antitachycardia pacing are included. A relatively new and minor aspect, pacing for tachyarrhythmias, especially the implantable cardioverter-defibrillator, has not been fully described. The latter may be added to an encyclopedic book of cardiac pacing such as this in the next edition.

We recommend this book to all physicians who care for pacemaker patients. In addition, anyone with a special interest in cardiac pacing can certainly find answers to their questions from a specific chapter or even part of a chapter in this book.

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Cardiology and Co-Existing Disease

Edited by Elliot Rapaport, M.D.

Churchill Livingstone, New York (1994)
391 pages, illustrated, $85.00
ISBN: 0-443-08887-X

In recent years a large number of cardiology books have been published that address monographically different aspects of heart disease, particularly ischemic heart disease and cardiac arrhythmias. Generally speaking, these texts usually make the assumption that patients have only heart disease. However, the truth is that patients with heart disease not only often have other diseases, but that these diseases have cardiac repercussions, particularly in their terminal stages.

Cardiology and Co-Existing Disease, edited by Elliot Rapaport, a distinguished cardiologist who has been a pioneer in different fields of cardiology, deals with this problem. In my opinion, it could not have come at a better moment, as an update of the complex interactions between the heart and the rest of the human body has been sorely needed. The editor merits praise for his choice of the 11 topics, as do the authors who wrote them. Each chapter is an update of the principal diseases related to the heart, and together they read seamlessly—credit again to the editor.

The book describes topics ranging from the classical aspects of relations between the heart and other diseases (such as Chapter X, "Neurologic Disease") to very recent topics. I believe that almost every important aspect of these different interrelations is covered.

There are a few minor points not mentioned in the book. For instance, there is no discussion of the repolarization disorders that occur as a result of alcohol intake, and the chapter on thyroid disorders does not mention the importance of amiodarone use on thyroid disease, probably because this drug is used less widely in the United States than in Europe.

Overall, both the publisher and the editor and his collaborators deserve congratulations for the exceptional timeliness of this book. At last we have a book that covers this entire field and one that may well become required reading in every cardiology center.

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