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978-0-521-72018-2 - The Clinical Anaesthesia Viva Book: Second edition

Julian M. Barker, Simon L. Maguire and Simon J. Mills

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The Clinical Anaesthesia Viva Book

Second edition

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Foreword

In the 7 years since this popular book was first published, there have been a number of changes in the Final FRCA Examination. In accordance with the standards laid down by the Regulator, the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB), these changes have been intended to increase the reliability of the examination, particularly the vivas, which are now known as 'structured oral examinations' reflecting the changes introduced.

However, to the aspiring candidate entering the examination hall, these changes are of little concern; the knowledge and presentation skills needed when answering a question are the same as they have always been. And, that is where this book will be of immense assistance.

There are excellent tips on revising for the examination, how to present a case or answer a direct question, and useful hints on interpreting the chest X-ray and other data. With an excellent index to help, there is a huge amount of clinical material to work through for the Long Cases and Short Cases. Because no two vivas are ever the same, even with identical opening questions, the authors have provided much more information than would be expected during the actual vivas. This allows for revision in areas where the Examiners may, or may not, lead you depending on how well you are doing.

The authors rightly stress the need to structure your answers and that there may be no right or wrong answer to some of the clinical questions. What the Examiners want to know is what would you do, and why.

Successful candidates at the vivas are those who are knowledgeable, have seen a lot of clinical cases in a variety of specialties and who can distil and communicate the essence of a clinical case to their supervisors. Although reading this book will not prepare you completely for the Clinical Structured Oral Examination, it will go a long way towards making sure you know what is expected and can present yourself well on the day.

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Preface

Welcome to the second edition of *The Clinical Anaesthesia Viva Book*. We are extremely grateful for all the positive feedback that we received for the first edition, both from candidates for the FRCA and from examiners and consultant colleagues. We actually set about writing a 'Book 2' several months ago and two things became apparent. Firstly, was the fact that the first book needed some updating, especially with regard to some aspects of peri-operative care; examples of this are investigation of high-risk patients for non-cardiac surgery and the recommendations for peri-operative beta-blockade. Secondly, after questioning the current batch of trainees about what they had been asked in their clinical vivas, it became clear that while there were some new questions, they weren't in abundance. This is good news if you are about to take the exam and reaffirms a point we made in the first edition – there aren't many 'new' diseases, just patients still suffering from bad hearts, bad chests and difficult airways that need anaesthesia! The clinical problems remain very much the same, and this explains why it can't be an easy job to write new questions for the exam! For these reasons we decided to add to, and update, the first book.

Having been consultants for 5 years or so now, the three of us felt a bit more distanced from the exam than we did when we wrote the first edition. For that reason we enlisted the help of three excellent senior trainees who have enabled us to keep the book fresh. This has, however, led to a small rugby team of authors; still, someone has to compete with the numbers on a professorial general surgical ward-round and it may as well be the anaesthetists!

We have endeavoured to write the book in the same style as the first edition. The questions were constructed after asking candidates from recent viva examinations what they had been asked. Some of the long cases in particular may cover a few topics in any given scenario (e.g. obesity and a difficult airway) and to keep the flow of the line of questioning we have answered these questions as they occurred. We have cross-referenced some of the questions but there is a slight element of repetition. We decided to leave this in for the sake of completeness and so the whole question represented what the candidate experienced.

We hope that you find the book useful and we wish you success in the Final FRCA.

Julian Barker
Simon Maguire
Simon Mills

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