Pain Management in Interventional Radiology

As interventionalists become more involved with patients as care providers rather than solely as proceduralists, understanding and treating pain is a vital part of daily practice. This book provides an overview of the multiple techniques used in the management of pain in interventional radiology suites. Topics include techniques for the treatment and prevention of pain caused by interventional procedures, as well as minimally invasive techniques used to treat patients with chronic pain symptoms. Approximately half of the book is dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of spinal pain; other chapters focus on intraprocedural and post-procedural pain management, embolization and ablation techniques used to treat patients with uncontrollable pain, and alternative treatments for pain relief. This book is a practical resource for anyone looking to acquire skills in locoregional or systemic pain control and wishing to improve the quality of life for patients undergoing procedures or suffering from disease-related pain.

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To C. Eugene and Virginia L. Ray
Pain Management in Interventional Radiology

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Everyone feels pain. Everyone feels physical pain, to one degree or another. Pain, or simply the thought of being in pain, often changes our actions as no other physical sensation can. While often a necessary physical response to keep us out of harm’s way (touching the hot handle of a pot, for example), pain becomes its own entity when it is associated with an underlying disease process.

Why is pain associated with disease? From an evolutionary perspective, was pain necessary for some reason to let the individual know that something was amiss (even though nothing could be done about it)? Was disease-associated pain used for some other, perhaps subconscious, purpose? Perhaps understanding the “why” is not all that important in today’s world; after all, the bottom line is that pain simply hurts! And disease-associated pain can hurt most of all. We as health care providers should be able to do something about it – shouldn’t we?

From one perspective, medicine (traditional or “Western” medicine in particular) has done relatively little to abate pain. Most of the major advances in pain control over the past 150 years have been in the field of pharmacology; general anesthesia is the prime example of pain control. With the exception of medications, however, little progress has been made in managing disease-associated pain over the past few decades. More work – much more work – remains. Shouldn’t minimally invasive techniques spearhead this effort?

The goal of this book is simple. It is to provide the appropriate tools to the interventional radiologist, anesthesiologist, surgeon, or whoever else is interested in minimally invasive techniques to control pain before, during, or after procedures. Its intent is to provide an overview of multiple techniques used in pain management, to review the currently available literature regarding these techniques, and hopefully to act as a springboard to motivate practitioners and researchers alike to develop the next better mousetrap to care for our patients in pain. It is my sincere hope that someone, somewhere, will have an improved quality of life stemming from the reading of this book by their health care provider.

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