

companies previously involved exclusively in single-use instruments are either relabelling their instruments for limited-reuse or making them entirely reusable.

- Ensure that decisions to purchase new equipment or instruments are all inclusive. Most hospitals that have started laparoscopic surgery in the early 1990s are replacing their first-generation laparoscopic instruments. Many current instruments offered on the market are "take-aparts." This, theoretically, is to promote easier and more thorough cleaning of the instruments. Many institutions have purchased these instruments without involving the people that have to decontaminate and reprocess such instruments. If your Central Supply Department (CSD) is anything like the ones I am familiar with, this can become a nightmare. Quality of personnel notwithstanding, anyone who thinks that introducing dozens of "take-apart" instruments for daily processing can be an easy and seamless operation needs some education in the ways most CSDs work. Take-apart instruments lead to misplaced and lost parts that generate costs. It also means having to put these instru-

ments back together correctly in a unit that deals daily with thousands of instruments from various specialties. For many, this is impossible. Bad purchase decisions can be made by using a top-down process that overlooks important issues and stakeholders. It allows acquisition of instruments that are over-engineered, impractical or expensive to maintain.

Interestingly, other corporations have dealt with the same issue of cleaning thoroughness by producing instruments with the insulation bonded to the instruments or with cleaning channels designed to be used with ultrasonic washers. Clearly solutions can be found if ideas by those individuals on the front line of instrument use are valued.

- Encourage internal initiative to question new products or instruments. I will always remember that junior resident doing a rotation in the surgical intensive care unit and listening to nurses discussing the recent increase of *Pseudomonas* infections in the unit. He reflected on the subject and decided to take culture samples from the solution that the hospital had recently purchased as skin disinfecting product. Every sample grew *Pseudomonas*. This

was a very positive career move for him. We must become very critical of the products that we use and not hesitate to do our own evaluation of the manufacturer's claims especially when problems arise.

Economists tell us that the next decades will define a period of organized rationing of medical care, because no nation, however prosperous, can afford all the new, expensive advances. This will require that physicians and surgeons become more active in the evaluation of new technology. We must develop a credible lobby to advise government and industry in this area. This consensus must arise from the trenches of surgery, be evidence-based and not be an intellectual technocratic process far removed from daily reality.

References

1. Campbell BA, Wells GA, Palmer WN, Martin DL. Reuse of disposable medical devices in Canadian hospitals. *Am J Infect Control* 1987;15(5):196-200.
2. DesCôteaux JG, Tye L, Poulin EC. Reuse of disposable laparoscopic instruments: cost analysis. *Can J Surg* 1996;39(2):133-9.

Books and Other Media Received

Livres et autres documents reçus

This list is an acknowledgement of books and other media received. It does not preclude review at a later date.

Cette liste énumère les livres et autres documents reçus. Elle n'en exclut pas la critique à une date ultérieure.

A Primer on Amputations and Artificial Limbs. George Murdoch and A. Bennett Wilson. 295 pp. Illust. Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Ltd., Springfield, Ill. 1998. US\$63.95 (clothbound); \$US49.95 (paperbound). ISBN 0-398-06800-3 (clothbound); 0-398-06801 (paperbound)

Surgery of Congenital Heart Disease. Pediatric Cardiac Care Consortium 1984-1995. Perspectives in Pediatric Cardiology, Volume 6. Edited by James H. Moller and Paul F. Dwan. 391 pp. Illust. Futura Publishing Company, Inc., Armonk, NY. 1998. US\$97. ISBN 0-87993-678-9

Transplantation Surgery. Edited by John L.R. Forsythe. A companion to Specialist Surgical Practice. Series editors: Sir David C. Carter, O. James Garden and Simon Paterson-Brown. 336 pp. Illust.

W.B. Saunders Company, Ltd, London, England; Harcourt Brace & Co. Canada, Ltd., Toronto. 1997. Can\$106. ISBN 0-7020-2146-7

Varicose Veins, Venous Disorders, and Lymphatic Problems in the Lower Limbs. David J. Tibbs, David C. Sabiston Jr., Mark G. Davies, Peter S. Mortimer and John H. Scurr. 254 pp. Illust. Oxford University Press, London, England; Oxford University Press, Canada, Toronto. 1997. Can\$268.95. ISBN 0-19-262762-7