

BOOK REVIEW

Non-invasive Ventilation and Weaning: Principles and Practice

Edited by M. Elliott, S. Nava and B. Schönhofer

Published by Hodder Arnold, UK

Pages: 621. Price: £126.65. ISBN: 978-0340941522

One of the most important events you may face in your life is the possibility to participate to something historic. It was a privilege to be involved in the scientific development and practical dissemination of noninvasive mechanical ventilation (NIV). This treatment has been one of the most important developments in respiratory medicine over the past 15 years, changing from a niche technique to first-line ventilatory treatment for acute and chronic respiratory failure, at least in some conditions. The proof being that NIV has even been used in television hospital dramas, such as *ER*.

However, there is another side to the story. Working with NIV gave me the opportunity to meet, and become friends with, many scientists and practitioners from across Europe and the USA. Some of the relevant ideas leading to the present knowledge and application of NIV were born around dinner tables, with French or Italian wines to influence, and this is not a joke! Most of these friends (beginning with the three editors of this book) are among the authors of the chapters in this fundamental book on NIV which, it is not difficult to forecast, will be considered the Bible for NIV applicants.

It is noteworthy that this book (with an E-book edition including appendices) does not begin with theory (hence “principles” in the title) but with equipment and practice. This part is comprised of three sections and 19 chapters dealing with all technicalities, devices and organisational problems of NIV application. The second part includes 13 sections and 46 chapters addressing the application of NIV in different diseases and clearly describing indications, contraindications, outcomes and limits of NIV use. All these chapters have been written by leaders in the field, offering their theoretical knowledge and clinical experience.

I have read with interest many (but not all) chapters and I have learnt so much, despite my experience. I would recommend this book not only to medical students but also to senior doctors, pulmonologists, intensivists, nurses and physiotherapists. Despite the triumph of the “bite and escape” information, I am still convinced that science has to be disseminated by means of written concepts, either through electronic or paper sources.

N. Ambrosino

Pisa, Italy