

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SIR:

We read with interest the article by Dr. Noble entitled "Accuracy of Halothane Vaporizers in Clinical Use" (Canad. Anaesth. Soc. J. 17: 135) in which he reported results similar to those described by us in 1968.¹ We found that the dial settings of the Fluotec Mark II vaporizers we tested were not accurate with regard to the delivered vapour concentration of halothane. At a fresh gas flow rate of 8 L/min, there was a tendency to get higher concentrations at low dial settings, and lower concentrations at high dial settings, the change-over taking place at about the 2 per cent setting. These results were in accordance with those found by Hall *et al.*² At a 4 L fresh gas flow, we found that the delivered halothane concentration adhered more closely to the dial settings, and there was less "tailing off" at the higher settings.

Dr. Noble and Adner and Hallen³ found the vaporizers to be more accurate after servicing by the manufacturers. The vaporizers tested by us had been in frequent use in this hospital for an unknown period of time, and had not been serviced. It would appear that the performance of such vaporizers does deteriorate with time, and therefore one should comply with the manufacturer's recommendations that vaporizers be returned to them at yearly intervals for servicing and re-calibration. From the published work on this subject it is obvious that undue reliance must not be placed on vaporizer settings as an indication of delivered vapour concentration and that the clinical signs of anaesthesia must remain of paramount importance.

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REFERENCES

1. MORGAN, M. & LUMLEY, J. Reliability of Halothane Vaporisers. *Anaesthesia*. 23: 440 (1968).
2. HALL, J. M.; HELLEWELL, J.; FISCHER, E. L.; BURNS, T. H. S.; & FUZZEY, G. J. J. A Comparison of Two Types of Halothane Vaporiser. *Brit. J. Anaesth.* 38: 494 (1966).
3. ADNER, M. & HALLEN, B. Reliability of Halothane Vaporizers. *Acta Anaesth. Scandinav.* 9: 233 (1965).

BOOK REVIEW

SPINAL ACUOLOGY. By C. N. SHEALY, M.D. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas; Toronto, Ryerson. Price \$10.50.

THIS 145-page monograph is written by a neurosurgeon, and is the outcome of his interest in diagnostic and therapeutic injections within and adjacent to the vertebral canal. Particular stress is laid at all times on the severity of the complications which may ensue. There is little of interest to the practising anaesthetist, with the exception of a brief and incomplete chapter on spinal anaesthesia.

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