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Animal Pain Perception and Alleviation

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BOOK REVIEW

Animal Pain Perception and Alleviation, Edited by R. L. Kitchell and H. H. Erickson, American Physiological Society, Bethesda, Maryland, 1983.

This book is a collection of papers from a symposium on pain in animals, which was held in conjunction with the 66th Annual Meeting of the Federation of the American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) in New Orleans, Louisiana, April, 1982. The book is divided into two parts: the perception of pain and the alleviation of pain. The pain perception section contains current information on peripheral, spinal, and supraspinal pain mechanisms in animals, anatomical pathways and pain control systems, segmental neurophysiological mechanisms, stimulation-produced analgesia, behavioral procedures for the assessment of pain, pain assessment during surgical manipulations and the phylogenesis of pain expression in animals. The section on the alleviation of pain is brief. It contains a discussion of important species differences in the absorption and biotransformation of drugs used to alleviate pain. Also included are papers on analgesic drug evaluation procedures in horses and a summary of common agents used to control pain in dogs and cats.

Most of the papers were written by authorities in their respective fields. Interestingly, even

though the book is devoted to a discussion of animal pain, only a few of the authors are veterinarians. The book is well organized, easy to follow, and generally easy to read. Most of the authors have presented adequate research data that reflected the extent of our knowledge of pain mechanisms at the time of the symposium. This was particularly true for the chapters on descending control systems and stimulation-produced analgesia. The chapters on general anesthesia and control of pain in cats and dogs contain useful summaries of information that can be found in most modern veterinary pharmacology textbooks but add little information on new methods or drugs to alleviate pain.

This book should be read by every scientist doing animal research in which procedures are employed that are painful or even potentially painful. In addition, this collection of papers should be of interest to various regulatory officials who have to be concerned about the health and welfare of animals used in numerous research and educational facilities. The topic of animal pain should be of interest to all practicing veterinarians; therefore, this book may be of value to those practitioners who are well-versed in neuroanatomy and neurophysiology.

—DR. D. D. DRAPER