Comparison of 1954 and 1970 Editions of Elements of Pediatric Anesthesia to Understand Changes in Content and Practice

David B. Waisel; MD
Boston Children’s Hospital; Harvard Medical School; Boston; MA

Introduction
Changes in different editions of one textbook offer insight into priorities and medical practice. The 1954 and 1970 versions of Elements of Pediatric Anesthesia were compared.

Methods
The 1954 and 1970 versions were compared by overall organization and emphasis as well as by more granular issues such as medical facts and specific practice patterns.

Conclusions
Comparing the 1954 and 1970 books informs about which advances in anesthesia and pediatrics had enough of a clinical effect to warrant changes to a new edition. For example, the greater focus on the anatomy, physiology and anesthetic care of premature infants and neonates likely reflected the growth of neonatology and pediatric intensive care units, improved ability to provide pediatric ventilation, and progress in pediatric congenital heart surgery. These clinical developments led to more and sicker infants having surgery, requiring those who anesthetized children to be familiar with the changes. The pediatric intensive care unit in part arose from the lessons learned from the polio epidemic, which led to the progression of "respiratory units" to adult intensive care units to pediatric intensive care units.

Understanding these progressions helps us understand current changes and anticipate future ones.

References