Fig. 1. The combined spinal-epidural technique. Typically, an epidural needle is inserted in the epidural space (top left) and a spinal needle is inserted through it (top middle). Because of the presence of air in the epidural space, the pencil-point spinal needle may deform the dura considerably before puncturing it (top right). After injection through the spinal needle, it is withdrawn, an epidural catheter is inserted (bottom left), and the epidural needle is withdrawn (bottom right).