

BOOKS RECEIVED

FUNDAMENTALS OF OPERATIVE TECHNIQUES IN NEUROSURGERY. SECOND EDITION. 2010. By E. Sander Connolly Jr., Guy M. McKhann II, Judy Huang, Tanvir F. Choudhri, Ricardo J. Komotar, J. Mocco. Published by Thieme Medical Publishers, Inc. 883 pages. C\$115 approx.

TUTORIAL ON NEURAL SYSTEMS MODELING. 2010. By Thomas J. Anastasio. Published by Sinauer Associates, Inc. 553 pages. C\$80 approx.

ACUTE NEURONAL INJURY - THE ROLE OF EXCITOTOXIC PROGRAMMED CELL DEATH MECHANISMS. 2010. Edited by Denson G. Fujikawa. Published by Springer. 306 pages. C\$200 approx.

HOW TO READ A PAPER - THE BASICS OF EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE. FOURTH EDITION. 2010. By Trisha Greenhalgh. Published by Wiley-Blackwell. 238 pages. C\$54 approx.

FOCAL PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHIES. FOURTH EDITION. 2010. By John D. Stewart. Published by JBJ Publishing. 692 pages. C\$200 approx.

HOW TO SURVIVE IN MEDICINE - PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY. 2010. By Jenny Firth-Cozens with Jamie Harrison. Published by Wiley-Blackwell. 127 pages. C\$46 approx.

EVIDENCE-BASED CHRONIC PAIN MANAGEMENT. 2010. Edited by Catherine F. Stannard, Eija Kalso, Jane Ballantyne. Published by Wiley-Blackwell. 450 pages. C\$240 approx.

NEUROANATOMY THROUGH CLINICAL CASES. 2010. By Hal Blumenfeld. Published by Sinauer Associates, Inc. 1006 pages. C\$85 approx.

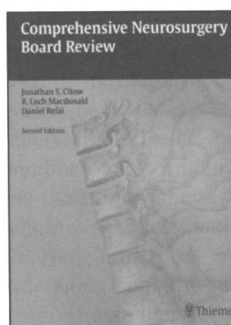
BOOKS REVIEWED

COMPREHENSIVE NEUROSURGERY BOARD REVIEW. SECOND EDITION. 2010. Edited by Jonathan S. Citow, R. Loch Macdonald, Daniel Refai. Published by Thieme Publishers, New York. 576 pages. C\$140 approx.

Rated **UNAVAILABLE**

“Comprehensive Neurosurgery Board Review” is the second edition of a text that is well-recognized by residents, fellows, and consultant neurosurgeons across North America. Its previous edition has served as the foundation of study material for many sitting their board exams both in Canada and the United States. The editors of this version have assembled a dynamic group of young neurosurgeons in their intermediate and senior levels of training to provide a contemporary update on need-to-know topics in neurosurgery.

As in the previous edition, the book has been organized into six key chapters: anatomy, physiology, pathology and radiology, neurology, neurosurgery, and critical care. Those writing their board exams should not be mistaken by the title of the book; the practice of neurosurgery requires knowledge of many other associated areas and the editors of this book have done well to follow a logical progression from the basics of anatomy and



physiology, to the detailed clinical topics encountered in daily practice. Each chapter is divided further into distinct sections; this allows readers to fully conceptualize the presented material, a key objective while studying for any examination. The anatomical illustrations are of high quality and for those required to draw diagrams on an exam, many lend themselves well to this purpose. Radiographs and photomicrographs have been well chosen to exemplify the clinical diagnosis under discussion. Treatment strategies and figures provided for epidemiology and outcome appear current, and reflect those discussed with patients in routine practice.

The biggest strength of this book as an exam preparation guide is contained in its layout. Each topic is structured in point form, and the short note format of each section will allow readers to capture the most important information in the shortest period of time. However, the book is a review as its title suggests. As such, it will not serve as a substitute for the detailed study of any of the topics covered within it. A reference list of the most pertinent literature in each of the clinical areas covered would have been helpful for readers to learn more about those topics. Similarly given the purpose of the book, a specific listing of chapter sections in the table of contents would be helpful in quickly guiding readers to particular areas of interest rather than searching through entire chapters, some of which are almost 200 pages in length.

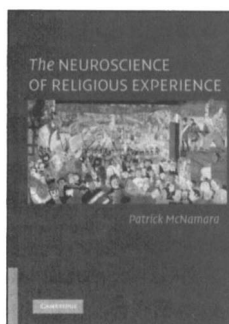
The authors of “Comprehensive Neurosurgery Board Review” should be commended for assimilating a large and ever-growing body of information into an examination review guide that is succinct yet broad in its coverage of material. Readers of this

volume will be pleased with their ability to retain useful information from this well-structured, current review of topics important to neurosurgical residents, fellows, and consultants alike. Those appearing for their certification examinations, and those looking for a quick, ready reference on fundamental knowledge in neurosurgery would be wise to keep this volume on their bookshelf.

*Shobhan Vachhrajani
Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

THE NEUROSCIENCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE. 2009. By Patrick McNamara. Published by Cambridge University Press. 301 pages. C\$90 approx.

Rated ★★



Prior to becoming a neurologist, my first career was in theology, spirituality, and comparative religion. Given my background, I am easily lured by the dialogue between religion and neuroscience, and I have a decent collection of books on the combined subjects. Surprisingly, I have rarely ever been able to finish reading a book that explores what should be a profound connection. Somehow I just can't get as excited by the combination of topics as I can by either topic alone.

I forced myself to finish reading Patrick McNamara's book, but unfortunately I again have been left feeling very dissatisfied by what should be a captivating conversation between science and religion. As Albert Einstein said, "Science without religion is lame, and religion without science is blind." Nevertheless, the dialogue between the two has once again left me feeling both lame and blind. Of course that may say more about me than about Patrick McNamara's book, but I will attempt to dispassionately explain what I liked, and what I did not like, about "The Neuroscience of Religious Experience".

I liked how the author develops an original theory of the self, the divided self, and the self's relationship to God. He describes a process which he calls "decentering" to which he applies a neurological model of familiar aspects of brain function, neurochemistry, and functional neuroimaging. The essence of his theory is that religion is a powerful tool which can allow an individual to "decenter" in such a way that allows self-transformation. McNamara presents some evidence that the "neurology" of religious experience occurs via the neural networks between the amygdala, the prefrontal cortex, and the anterior temporal lobes particularly on the right side of the brain. I liked this central thesis, and appreciated some of the ways in which he develops his theory.

Unfortunately this book is too much of a good thing. It is excessively wordy, painfully poorly written, and reads much more

like a PhD thesis in psychology than as a credible contribution to the literature of either neuroscience or religion. It probably deserves a place within the psychology literature, since this work is really a psychologist's treatise. For the neurologist there is very little recognizable "neuroscience", and for the religious person there is very little that inspires. The content of the book oscillates between pedantic psychological opinion on the "Self" and fragments of contemporary neuroscience, but there is little cohesive and substantial content to bind the author's message together. I think McNamara's points could have been made much more simply, clearly, and briefly, and that the key concepts in the book lose a lot of their potential power because they are lost in the translation. This may also be a reflection of some underlying muddled thinking and off-hand conceptualizing about topics that are by their nature mysterious and not necessarily within reach of the rational mind. It is almost impossible to engage in a dialogue between religion and science without reducing the mystery of existence and the human spirit to a mere biology of religion.

This book will join the other enticing and attractive books on religion and the brain on the shelf, but I think the money would be better spent helping widows and orphans.

*Edward J. Atkins
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada*

CAROTID ARTERY STENTING: THE BASICS. 2009. Edited by Jacqueline Saw. Published by Humana Press (a part of Springer Science and Business Media). 276 pages. C\$200 approx.

Rated ★★★★★

The editor intends this book to be "a learning resource on the multifaceted management of patients with carotid artery stenosis, with key focus on extracranial carotid artery stenting." It is meant to "complement the "hands-on" experience of interventional trainees and established interventionists."

The book has six parts, each part authored or co-authored by neurologists, vascular surgeons, one radiologist, and interventional cardiologists.

The first part comprises known information about stroke and TIA, as well as a history of various trials and medications used to prevent or treat stroke. The reader is given an overview of carotid endarterectomy, technique and indications.

The second part comprises imaging, both pre-procedural and intraprocedural, of the arterial circulation, with sections on the catheterization laboratory, and on non-invasive imaging of the extracranial carotid circulation.

The third part describes patient selection, pre-procedural patient preparation, and operator training and accreditation.

The fourth part describes routes of vascular access for stenting,

