

PALLIATIVE NEUROLOGY. 2006. By Ian Maddocks, Bruce Brew, Heather Waddy, Ian Williams. Published by Cambridge University Press. 260 pages. Price C\$66.

Palliative Hospice Care, initially established for the dying cancer patient, is now expanding to End-of-Life (EOL) Care for non-malignant diseases. 'Palliative Neurology' directly addresses the day to day care for the patient dying with a neurological illness. The book approaches EOL care from three main perspectives; Palliative Care, Neurology and Ethical Decision-making.

Section I is titled 'Palliative Management'. It introduces concepts of palliation, nodal points in decision-making and common deficiencies, and themes in palliation practice. These basic palliative principles are useful to the non-palliative health care provider including those learning or teaching the principles and practice of Palliative Care.

Section II, 'Major discomforts in advanced neurological illness', reviews symptoms experienced by patients dying with neurological illness such as: pain; problems with muscles and movement; symptoms related to: bulbar, respiratory, gastrointestinal, urological, cognitive, behavioural, psychological and other functions. This section reviews relevant clinical patient/family concerns and management.

Section III reviews 'Major neurological conditions requiring palliation' including: stroke, demyelinating disease, Parkinson's disease, dementia, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, motor neuron disease, incurable infections, muscular dystrophy, neuropathies, Huntington's disease, cerebral neoplasm's and sequelae of traumatic brain injury. This basic introduction to neurological illness presents EOL care issues and management from a practical perspective.

Section IV is 'Ethical Issues' including: consent and decision-making, advanced directives, proxy decision-making, ethical issues in states of disordered consciousness, terminal sedation and euthanasia. The authors introduce these issues in a non-judgmental, succinct manner. Readers will require other resources to determine the implications of these ethical issues in their own country.

Section V is the 'Appendices' and it includes: practical aspects of home care, characteristics of an effective palliation service, and suggested further reading with a table for medications referred to in the text. Persons developing and establishing care for patients dying from neurological illnesses, or those teaching this topic, should find organized, useful information within this section.

The primary strength of this book is its introduction of a broad range of topics from a clinically relevant bedside perspective for patients dying of neurological illnesses. It is very readable, from cover to cover, and it can be used as a reference book to assist with patient care in a 'cookbook' manner. As well, it contains information pertaining to policy development, similar to a patient needs assessment. In format, this book resembles student lecture material, or patient care guides.

The main weakness of this book is the absence of references. However, the section on further reading strengthens it. Recommended pharmaceuticals may require country and patient specific adjustments. This book introduces many perspectives of care and initially I was uncertain of the target reader population. The central focus of the book is patient care rather than discipline specific information. Therefore, health care providers from varying disciplines could benefit from different sections in the book. I enjoyed reading this book despite its weaknesses.

'Palliative Neurology' is a welcome addition to the Palliative Care literature. It focuses on the day to day care of patients/families dying from a neurological illness. It is an inexpensive, easy to read, guide book written by providers depicting clinical expertise. I would recommend this for palliative and neurology students, their teachers as well as bedside care providers, policy makers and administration decision-makers providing care for patients dying from neurological illnesses.

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ATLAS OF ADULT ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAPHY. 2004. By Zumsteg, Hungerbuhler, Wieser. Published by Hippocampus Verlag. 179 pages. Price C\$180.

The interpretation of electroencephalograms (EEG) is both an art and a science. The skilful electroencephalographer has a sound grasp of basic and clinical concepts, is able to accurately identify wave forms, patterns and sequences of cerebral electrophysiological signals, and can interpret them according to the clinical context. The central role of electroencephalographic atlases is the compilation and graphic depiction of prototypic elements that can aid the interpretation of EEGs. This atlas of Adult Electroencephalography is a brief (179 pages) compendium of important EEG phenomena. As the authors state, relevance rather than comprehensiveness is the aim. The atlas is organized into a brief introduction to digital EEG recording and the principles of Low Resolution Electro-magnetic Tomography (LORETA). This is followed by representative EEG epochs of 45 normal phenomena including wakefulness, sleep, benign patterns, activation and artefacts. The last section consists of abnormal EEG phenomena, which comprise slowing, periodic patterns, paroxysmal patterns, seizures, and coma and brain death.

The graphs and figures are of excellent quality, and the text is most readable and unambiguous. The atlas is enriched by close to 400 relevant references for the interested reader and the index is germane and to the point.

Each EEG pattern is accompanied by brief, explanatory text that provides salient information and references on the topic at hand. A unique aspect of the atlas is the 3-D tomographic images demonstrating cerebral areas showing maximal activity according to the LORETA map. This interesting addition can be judged either as enjoyable and useful, or as irrelevant, depending on the reader's view of this novel technology. I found these images of high quality, useful and innovative. The authors do provide a brief rationale and a caveat for LORETA.

The accompanying CD is intended as an interactive tool of 48 exercises. I had trouble launching the application in different computers. However, the power point presentation is readily accessible and contains a well prepared collection of EEG vignettes with questions and answers.

In summary, this is a good quality, concise and informative atlas of adult EEG whose organization and innovative aspects make it a functional and accessible resource, particularly for new learners.

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