

Book Reviews

AIDS AND THE NERVOUS SYSTEM. 2ND EDITION. 1996. Edited By Joseph R. Berger & Robert M. Levy. Published by Lippincott-Raven. 800 pages. \$C150.00 approx.

The first edition of *AIDS and the Nervous System*, published in 1988, sought to serve both as a practical guide for both primary care providers and specialists caring for HIV-infected patients and also as a comprehensive reference for the evolving field of NeuroAIDS. Editors Rosenblum, Levy and Bredesen admirably achieved these goals. With publication of *AIDS and the Nervous System, second edition*, the editors are somewhat different, but the objectives for this extensively revised text remain the same. Berger and Levy incorporate into the new edition the significant gains in our understanding of HIV neurology in the 8 years between editions, while maintaining the balance between clinical utility and completeness that was the hallmark of the first edition.

Also carried forward to this newer edition are sections devoted to both symptoms-oriented and disease-specific analyses of HIV-related neurologic disorders, an organization that preserves the utility of the book for clinicians. New to the second edition, and reflecting advances in the field, are the evolution of a section on research topics to chapters reviewing HIV neuropathogenesis and the addition of a section on pathology. The number of chapters has increased significantly, with the additional chapters evenly dispersed among clinical, pathologic and scientific topics. The book is extremely well-referenced.

A distinguished collection of authors, representing many of the leading groups in NeuroAIDS, contributed to the text. Several chapters are particularly noteworthy. Brew and Tindall's "Neurological Manifestations of Primary HIV-1 Infection" clearly and concisely summarizes a topic that has not been reviewed comprehensively in the neurologic literature. In "Syphilis, HIV, and the Nervous System," Marra provides a thoughtful, critical and practical review of the sometimes conflicting literature of these frequently comorbid disorders. "Neurological Symptoms in HIV Infection" by Dal Pan, McArthur and Harrison outlines the approach to the HIV-infected patient with neurologic symptoms and Hollander's "Unusual opportunistic infections" reviews diagnostic possibilities for patients whose neurologic diagnosis remains elusive.

Criticisms are minor and few. Though probably unavoidable given the timing of this new edition, reference to protease inhibitors and combination antiretroviral therapy, now a cornerstone of HIV therapy, is conspicuously absent. Typographical errors in the first half of the book occur frequently enough to be at least mildly distracting. Even so, *AIDS and the Nervous System, second edition* succeeds as both an encyclopedic sourcebook and as a practical guide to evaluating and managing HIV-infected adults and children with neurologic symptoms and signs. As such, it will be useful for basic scientists seeking perspective on the clinical consequences of HIV virology and immunology as well as to primary care providers, neurologists, neurosurgeons, psychiatrists, neuroradiologists and neuropathologists participating the care of patients with HIV infection.

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SEIZURES AND EPILEPSY IN CHILDHOOD: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS. 2ND EDITION. 1997. By John M. Freeman, Eileen P.G. Vining and Diana J. Pillas. Published by Johns Hopkins Press. 320 pages. \$C22.00.

This clearly-written, informative manual is the second, revised edition of a deservedly popular layman's guide to epilepsy. Although directed toward parents of children with epilepsy and covering mainly pediatric aspects of epilepsy, there is much here which could benefit adult patients as well. The book is quite comprehensive and covers the gamut of information on epilepsy including a simplified discussion of pathophysiology, etiology, seizure phenomenology, diagnostic tests (including an excellent description of EEG), drug treatments and surgical therapy.

Fully one-third of the book is devoted to psychosocial and practical aspects of coping and living with epilepsy. In these sections, matters such as "what do you tell the school," coping with shattered expectations, overprotection and overindulgence of the child, sports and epilepsy, driving and epilepsy, marriage and pregnancy are discussed. The brief mention of the internet could have been expanded to include useful web sites for seeking further information.

The important topics of deciding whether to start anti-epileptic drugs and the approach to the single seizure, febrile seizures and discontinuation of anti-epileptic drugs are dealt with adequately.

Helpful features in this book are the frequent use of the question and answer format, inclusion of case examples and a glossary of medical terms. An informative chapter on the ketogenic diet, as would be expected from the authors who pioneered its use, is included. Occasional omissions or oversimplifications are found (eg., only generalized "spike-wave stupor" is discussed under non-convulsive status with no mention of complex partial status). By necessity the text carries an American bias, for example the inclusion of felbamate and the omission of clobazam, but this does not detract from its overall value.

Patients and families are increasingly avid seekers of information on epilepsy through printed materials, electronic media and the internet. For a reliable, readable and up-to-date source, this layman's manual stands toward the top of the heap and is heartily recommended.

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EYELID MYOCLONIA WITH ABSENCES. 1996. Edited by John S Duncan, CP Panayiotopoulos. Published by John Libbey & Company Limited. 122 pages. \$C43.00 approx.

Fifteen years ago I saw a 10-year-old girl in consultation for absence attacks associated with eyelid myoclonus. Her father assured me that there was no sense in treating the disorder – medications would not work. He knew because he had the same problem. He was in a rush to drive home! I had hoped that this book might address some of the questions raised by this special father-daughter pair.

This is a very specialized book about a very rare disorder. Unfortunately, there is not much new to say about eyelid myoclonia with absences that was not said by Dr. Peter Jeavons when he first described the condition in 1977. This book reports some of the deliberations of a symposium carried out at the Royal Society of