BOOK REVIEWS

Symptom Management in Multiple Sclerosis. 3rd Ed., Randall T. Schapiro, ed. pp. 204, 1998. Price US$25.00. ISBN 1-88879922-6. Demos Medical Publishing, Inc, New York

This book is intended for patients with MS and their relatives as well as healthcare professionals involved in the treatment of these patients. A short introduction with up-to-date information about the disease, neuroanatomy, immunology and the new treatments for moderation of disease activity is given in the first part of the book. The main part deals with the different symptoms and their management. The chapters—one for each of 19 symptoms—start with a short description of the pathophysiology behind the symptoms, before presenting principles for rehabilitation and a well-covered list of medicinal treatment. The final part deals with physical exercise, nutrition and the process of psychological adaptation to the diagnosis. The language is pedagogic and although some topics are fairly complicated, most laymen will find it easy to understand. However, there is a problem with a book for both laymen and professionals. When describing how to evaluate symptoms and paraclinical investigations, expressions like “must”, “important to do” are used, for instance regarding fluoroscopy for dysphagia or MRT for low back pain. These recommendations are probably directed at doctors, but may induce anguish and doubt within patients about having received adequate examinations. As a doctor I would have preferred fewer categorical formulations. The book contains many good common-sense suggestions about how to relate to different problems, but I miss advice to family/friends. The chapter about fatigue is an excellent presentation of this main problem, but the advice about how to cope is limited to house-keeping and says nothing about work outside the home nor about how family members and friends should relate to the problem. In spite of these minor objections, I warmly recommend the book not only to patients but also to doctors and other health professionals that although not specialised in MS come in contact with these patients.

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Wheelchair Selection and Configuration. Rory A. Cooper, ed., p. 410, 1998. ISBN 1-888799-18-8. Demos Medical Publishing, Inc, New York.

This very comprehensive book describes the elementary and more complicated basic factors important for understanding the connection between wheelchair user, seating and mobility—how the wheelchair functions and how its adjustable parts are used for optimal person-to-device interface.

Wheelchair engineering and electronics fundamentals, the biomechanics and ergonomics of wheelchairs, selection of seat cushions and seating postural systems, as well as comparison between different powered and manual wheelchairs are all given exhaustive treatment.

More than 100 photographs, informative illustrations and schematic diagrams interspersed throughout the book help the reader to understand the contents of the many closely written pages. The audience for this book is first of all students studying occupational therapy, physical therapy, rehabilitation science and rehabilitation engineering. This book can also be strongly recommended for occupational therapists, prescribers and others who have knowledge and an interest in human anatomy and physiology or working experience within these fields.

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Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. A Synthesis of Research and Clinical Practice, Andrew Eisen & Charles Krieger, eds, 304 pp., 1998. Price: £45.00, US$74.95. ISBN 0-521-58103-6. Cambridge University Press, Edinburgh, UK.

Research in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) has accelerated during the last decade and consequently also our knowledge concerning all its different aspects. There are many books in the literature focusing on specific aspects of ALS.

The authors have succeeded in writing a book covering the whole range from pathological findings in ALS to clinical features, including epidemiology and imaging techniques. As a neurologist in an ALS team I would have appreciated more about the symptomatic treatment and total care of the patient. Despite these short-comings, however, the book is recommended to anyone interested in ALS; physicians, medical students and other caregivers.

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