

NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS. 2005. Edited by W.W. Fleischacker, D.J. Brookes. Published by SpringerWienNewYork. 141 pages. Price C\$140.

This thin volume is part of the European Institute of Healthcare book series. It consists of seven review articles originating from European institutions and authors reflecting the sponsorship of this particular book. The articles themselves are on disparate topics and indeed despite the title for the book do not all fit under the rubric of neurodevelopmental disorders (i.e. tics/obsessive compulsive disorders and schizophrenia).

In brief, the book consists of an article on the genetics of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and recent progress utilizing a variety of approaches to localizing genes which underlie this neurobehavioral disorder and the factors which may prevent successful identification of these particular genes. In the second particularly interesting article, the role of the cerebellum is discussed in the pathogenesis of learning disability or dyslexia. Unfortunately the basis for this particular review is drawn almost exclusively from the authors' own work and cannot be considered a comprehensive review of the field. A third article focuses on clinical aspects related to the diagnosis and treatment of developmental language impairment almost entirely overlooks the recent emphasis on non-language deficits (i.e. motor, cognition) as well as the persistence of such difficulties over time in these children. A fourth article focuses on the "clumsy child" and provides an overview of this emerging diagnostic construct. A fifth article explores in detail the relationship between tics of varying types and obsessive-compulsive disorders. This particular article is noteworthy for its extensive and exhaustive reference list. A penultimate article focuses on treatment efficacy in autism and the pervasive developmental disorders. It essentially is a superficial survey of a variety of treatment paradigms and surprisingly omits almost any discussion of what outcomes to be measured in this particular group of disorders in order to evaluate treatment efficacy. In addition a variety of alternative/complementary therapeutic interventions are given equal weight in this survey. A final article provides an overview of childhood schizophrenia and the section on management surprisingly omits any mention of risperidone as a treatment option.

From the foregoing synopsis the most flagrant deficit of this particular volume is self-evident. There is no attempt to provide a unifying theme nor any integration of the topics presented. The individual articles do not relate to each other and all stand independently. Furthermore, the major neurodevelopmental disabilities such as global developmental delay, mental retardation and cerebral palsy are not mentioned at all in this volume.

Due to the lack of any unifying theme and approach, the individual articles in this volume will appeal to different specialists including developmental pediatrics, child neurologists and child psychiatrists. It is unlikely that all the articles will be relevant to a single specialist physician.

Neurodevelopmental disabilities are a common problem in child health with attendant significant lifelong morbidity. A more comprehensive text would be of greater interest to physicians involved in the care of such children.

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STATUS EPILEPTICUS: A CLINICAL PERSPECTIVE. 2005. Edited Frank W. Drislane. Published by Humana Press. 363 pages. Price C\$120.

This book provides an update on status epilepticus. There has not been an explosion of knowledge of the topic since the classic monograph by Shorvon in 1994, but some excellent chapters by a well-chosen group of authors provide current, useful information and concepts. Those on epidemiology, the cellular physiology of status, nonconvulsive status epilepticus, the EEG in status and treatment of status epilepticus and refractory status epilepticus are well worth reading. Chapters on status epilepticus in children and neonates make the volume useful to pediatric neurologists as well to those who treat adults. I did not find the overlap that is inevitable in multi-authored texts to be a problem in this one: the chapters complemented each other and issues not raised by one author were raised by another, making the textbook quite comprehensive. The discussion on the importance of the intensity of seizures as an important causal component for brain damage was not as well addressed in earlier works. Chapters on treatment provide useful information on doses, routes of administration and caveats as well as algorithms.

There are a few minor deficiencies: 1. The effects of seizures on consciousness and its components could be better summarized. The newer concept of "dyscognitive" seizures is superior to older terms and more precisely describes the impairment. 2. Inhibition of inhibition as a mechanism for seizures and status is not mentioned. 3. The concept of ictal/post-ictal psychosis is mentioned but not sufficiently defined or explained. How does disruption of limbic function cause psychosis? 4. The indications for continuous EEG monitoring for high risk groups might be better addressed. However, such guidelines are yet to be developed.

The textbook is worth having in one's office as a ready reference for any front-line neurologist. Neurosurgeone, emergency physicians and intensivists would also find some chapters very practical and useful.

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