

**EUROPEAN HANDBOOK OF NEUROLOGICAL MANAGEMENT. SECOND EDITION. VOLUME 1 AND VOLUME 2.** 2011/2012. Edited by Nils Erik Gilhus, Michael Barnes, Michael Brainin. Published by Wiley-Blackwell. 580/353 pages. C\$220/200 approx.

Rated ★★★★★ Volume 1  
★★★★★ Volume 2

This two-volume work is an accumulation of the Guidelines to best practice as determined by expert panels of the European Federation of Neurological Societies – in the first volume, revisions of the 41 guidelines published in 2006 and in the second a compilation of a further 21 sets created since. The physical appearance of the books is attractive, the typeface pleasingly legible and the tables and recommendations well demarcated, although strangely printed on a faded pink background. Why the

work is presented in two volumes rather than one is not clear.

All of these guidelines have already been published in the European Journal of Neurology (EJN), so one's access to them through this work is a matter of convenience (and cost) rather than of necessity.

This is not a cheap offering. Is it worth PubMedming or buying? Emphatically, yes, it is. All scientific publications are works in progress. In these two volumes there are only about 60 sets of guidelines suggested for

management (or diagnosis) of neurological disorders, though more will be welcome and may be expected in years to come; but while some 50 areas of clinical neurology are covered here, there is a need for many more to be examined in this way. The selections in these two books are well-chosen and widely-based, from motor neuron disease through asymptomatic hyperCKemia, NMO, various pain states, status epilepticus, nystagmus, IOH, skin biopsy in the diagnosis of neuropathies, neuropathic pain, ischemic stroke and TIA (a consensus view of nearly 30 authors from a dozen countries); cognitive rehabilitation and much more, but of necessity it is incomplete, although certainly current; in the chapter on imaging in Multiple Sclerosis, about a quarter of the 176 references are new since 2006.

Some of the chapters concern areas of practice that are only marginally relevant for neurological clinicians: Disease-Specific CSF Tests, Neuroimaging in Motor Neuron Disease, and five chapters on Molecular Diagnosis, for example, seem a tad *recherché*, and there is occasional mention of drugs that are not available in Canada. But most chapters begin with a focused review of the subject, followed by an examination of the general, sociological, ethical, surgical, pharmacological and yet other methods of management in scholarly, neatly-written essays, usually basing recommendations upon original or published

analyses of the literature which lean heavily but not exclusively on the Cochrane data and the AAN publications. Some of these reviews are superb, the others just very good indeed.

When a book has already been peer-reviewed prior to its publication, and when it cites throughout a solid basis of evidence for its conclusions, it is hard to find significant fault in it. It would be churlish to regret the fact that is not comprehensive, though doubtless that will be achieved in time; or that the sources consulted are sometimes incomplete – for example, the Canadian Guidelines as to Headache Management published in the CMAJ seem to have been overlooked. There is but little redundancy, although the management of trigeminal neuralgia is discussed in two different chapters, the differences between the various authors' conclusions being of emphasis rather than of substance.

The AAN has produced Practice Parameters covering more subjects, but many of them are over five years-old. This important European publication provides a complementary set of sensible, current and evidence-based templates for the care of neurological patients, also based upon an analysis of the world's literature. As the AAN guidelines are globally relevant, so are those of the EFNS; with the possible exception of European borreliosis, every clinical subject covered here from Europe is relevant for practice in Canada, or indeed anywhere else.

In these two books North American neurologists can find advice on the management of 50 or so neurological disorders that is either evidence-based or at least represents the consensus opinion of a panel of European experts. Hippocrates and Arateus kindled neurology in the near east in antiquity; France and then the UK ignited it in the XIXth and the first part of the XXth centuries, while North American contributions have been pre-eminent in the last fifty years. With the expression of authoritative opinions such as are presented here from across Europe, one is reminded that the field is leveling again.

I told our Residents that I had been sent these interesting-looking books to review and that when I had done so I would present them to their library. I will not renege on that promise, but will print off the chapter titles and author names for myself (anyone can Google the name of the book to get the listings). Thereafter I can pull up the original papers from the EJN that are reproduced here when the need arises, and I will certainly do so; the integrity of these sources cannot be denied nor ignored.

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