

BOOKS RECEIVED

POCKET ATLAS OF SPINE SURGERY. 2012. By Kern Singh, Alexander R. Vaccaro. Published by Thieme Medical Publishers, Inc. 139 pages. C\$65.00 approx.

ATLAS OF ANATOMY. SECOND EDITION. 2012. Edited By Anne M. Gilroy, Brian R. MacPherson, Lawrence M. Ross. Published by Thieme Medical Publishers, Inc. 694 pages. C\$80.00 approx.

COMMON MOVEMENT DISORDERS PITFALLS: CASE-BASED LEARNING. 2012. By Alberto J. Espay, Anthony E. Lang. Published by Cambridge University Press. 123 pages. C\$75.00 approx.

LATERAL SKULL BASE SURGERY: THE HOUSE CLINIC ATLAS. 2012. Edited By Rick A. Friedman, William H. Slattery III, Derald E. Brackmann, Jose N. Fayad, Marc S. Schwartz. Published by Thieme Medical Publishers, Inc. 201 pages. C\$130.00 approx.

SYSTEMS BIOLOGY OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE. 2012. Edited by Peter Wellstead, Mathieu Cloutier. Published by Springer. 176 pages. C\$190.00 approx.

RHINOLOGY: DISEASES OF THE NOSE, SINUSES, AND SKULL BASE. 2012. Edited by David W. Kennedy, Peter H. Hwang. Published by Thieme Medical Publishers, Inc. 776 pages. C\$230.00 approx.

BOOKS REVIEWED

NEUROMUSCULAR DISORDERS. 2011. Edited by Rabi N. Tawil, Shannon Venance. Published by Wiley-Blackwell. 267 pages. C\$95 approx.



Rated

This little book has been a pleasure to review and now to own. The authors have admirably succeeded in their intent: "The challenge in writing this introductory textbook is to provide accessible, useful information about an ever more complex field of study."

Diseases and disorders of peripheral nerve, the motor neurones, and muscle - with the exception of classics like amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and myasthenia gravis - are usually difficult to sort out and diagnose for medical students, residents and neurologists not specializing in these "peripheral disorders". The introductory chapter sets the tone with a very useful hypothesis-driven guide to the approach to a diagnosis in a patient with a suspected neuromuscular disorder. The book is divided into four sections: myopathies, disorders of the neuromuscular junction, peripheral nerve, and motor neurons. Each section begins with a most useful "Approach to..." chapter that demystifies the field and gently guides the reader how to approach the patient suspected of having a disorder in one of these categories. Then, in each section, follow chapters on specific diseases or group of disorders, with clear explanations of the pathophysiology, and diagnostic and management strategies. Many of the authors are internationally acclaimed in their fields. There is a generous group of Canadian contributors that pleases this patriotic reviewer.

What is remarkable about this small book is how much information it packs in. Succinctness seems to have been the

editors' mantra. The text is augmented by exceedingly helpful tables and algorithms, and peppered with eye-catching "Tips and Tricks", "Caution", and "Science Revisited" inserts. Highly selected bibliography accompanies each chapter rather than an unhelpful excess of references.

Amongst this excellence are there any faults or omissions? An entire group of disorders, focal peripheral neuropathies, has been excluded. Leprosy gets a one word mention while it is considered to be the most common peripheral nerve disorder in the world, though perhaps diabetes neuropathies have overtaken it. By contrast, botulism has a chapter of its own. This raises a personal pet peeve that many medical texts focus mainly on what is of interest to physicians in the so-called developed world. The clinical photographs seem not to have been systematically selected. Ditto the muscle biopsy pictures which I suspect will be of little interest to most readers. The nerve conduction and electromyography illustrations are also not systematically presented, e.g., a repetitive stimulation study in botulism but not myasthenia gravis, myopathic motor unit potentials but not those of neurogenic disorders.

This book, and presumably the others in the Neurology in Practice series, shows why books remain essential even in this age of e-knowledge. Contained herein is the wisdom of experts on how to sensibly and relatively easily approach, understand, diagnose and manage this seemingly complicated group of disorders. This is not the over-referenced encyclopedic tome that is useless at the bedside.

This excellent book should be made available to students rotating through neurology, and should be owned by every neurology resident and most neurologists.

*John Stewart
North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*

