

**RECENT PROGRESS IN ALZHEIMER'S AND PARKINSON'S DISEASE.** 2005. Edited by Isreal Hanin, Ramon Cacabelos, Abraham Fisher. Published by Taylor and Francis, Oxford. 383 pages. Price C\$170.

The book contains chapters written by selected presenters from the 6th International Congress on Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases which took place in Seville, May 8-13 2003. The invited writers include leaders in their areas of research with a wide international representation. Similarly, topics are wide-ranging covering many aspects of pathophysiology of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

The majority of the articles are non-clinical, though exceptions include a chapter entitled "Can mild cognitive impairment predict Alzheimer's disease?" by Soininen et al and one called "The interrelationships between gait and cognitive function" by Giladi et al. The bulk of the papers cover molecular mechanism, from various perspectives. Many of the theories and hypotheses regarding the basis for these neurodegenerative disorders are touched upon in various chapters. For example there are chapters on synucleins, amyloid, tau, inflammation, Apolipoprotein E, vascular mechanisms, etc. Some of the chapters cover novel potential therapies including stem cell strategies.

The breadth of the coverage and inclusion of international authors who might not reach the general neurology or neurosurgery audiences are strengths of the book. In general, the chapters are well written and readable. As expected given a multi-author text, some chapters are more readable than others. Some chapters are essentially laboratory reports. In a sense the book is like a buffet.

What I found lacking was an overarching organization to the book. I approached the book in several ways. First, I started by reading the chapters sequentially and I found interesting points in the majority, but I soon flagged. Then I began dipping into it reading chapters that seemed of interest. Lastly, I tried to look up questions on pathophysiology while preparing a lecture on pathological aging. I'd say the dipping strategy was most successful and enjoyable. It was difficult to find information that could readily be incorporated into a lecture.

The target audience is not clear to me. My guess is that neuroscientists engaged in research in Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease would find some chapters of interest. They might be interested in the perspectives of colleagues engaged in areas of research similar to their own, but more likely would be interested in looking at divergent approaches. Some fields will likely have moved forward since the time of writing. Neurologists, psychiatrists and geriatricians with research interests in Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease also would find aspects of interest. I don't think the book would appeal to clinicians.

This book is an exemplar of the proliferation of texts that follow symposia. It seems like this was an exciting symposium. The panorama of topics presented in the books give some sense of that excitement. In the end, my impression is that I wish I had been there.

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**NEURO-OPHTHALMOLOGY: THE PRACTICAL GUIDE.** 2005. Edited by Leonard A. Levin, Anthony C. Arnold. Published by Thieme Medical Publishers, New York. 494 pages. Price C\$210.

This 494-page book is intended to act as a practical guide in the diagnosis and management of neuro-ophthalmic disorders for generalists and specialty-trained clinicians without specific neuro-ophthalmic expertise. The text highlights clinically relevant material, and directs the clinician to use information gleaned from the history and examination to guide the diagnostic process. The book is divided into four main components: an approach to the neuro-ophthalmic examination; an overview of specific neuro-ophthalmic symptoms and signs; a extensive review of neuro-ophthalmic disorders, with emphasis on management strategies; and a hands on approach to procedures in neuro-ophthalmology, including a chapter dedicated to billing issues.

The strength of the book lies in its niche appeal. The authors opt to forgo extraneous discussions of anatomy and pathophysiology, which do not directly aid the diagnostic process and instead present relevant clinical findings in a user-friendly format. World-renowned experts in the discipline of neuro-ophthalmology author many of the chapters contained within the text. Throughout the book, many sections are carefully crafted, and combine a nice balance of bulleted points and articulate text. The chapters are often concise and topic driven, which allows the reader to draw ready comparisons with clinical findings. The inclusion of over 200 illustrations and color photographs also aids the reader in this intuitive process. The chapters dedicated to the topics of neuro-imaging and visual field testing will help the reader navigate unfamiliar clinical terrain and aid in the interpretation of many spectacular figures and images depicted in the book. Throughout the text, potential diagnoses are identified in broad categories, and there are specific sections that highlight important points to keep in mind as well as "red flags" that warn the reader of diagnostic pitfalls.

Because the book is the product of multiple authors, there is much variability in writing styles and format throughout the text. Some chapters combine an esthetically pleasing and cogent blend of highlighted points and text, while other chapters overindulge the bullet option. Although the book is intended for specialists and generalists, it still might make for an ambitious read for non-ophthalmic trained clinicians. There are times when the content assumes knowledge that may not be readily available to the intended audience, particularly with reference to the use of some ophthalmic terminology and figure illustrations.

In summary, *Neuro-Ophthalmology: The Practical Guide* provides an excellent account of current neuro-ophthalmic knowledge in a wide variety of relevant topics. This book will hold appeal for clinicians of all types, particularly neurologists and ophthalmologists. Furthermore, the text would be an invaluable resource and should be included in the "recommended reading" list for residents in both disciplines.

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