



Book Reviews

Sexual and Reproductive Neurorehabilitation

Edited by Mindy Aisen

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There is a growing interest in the field of neuro-rehabilitation for patients with sexual and reproductive problems. It reflects the importance of sexuality as is being reported in numerous quality-of-life studies of neural-injured people. The current book addresses 'all members of the rehabilitation team', and refers to a long list, from neurologist to social worker. The authors do this in a rather conventional way; thus the book starts with chapters on basic physiology and pathophysiology, with the best part being three chapters on exclusively female problems connected with neurological disorders. The last part contains chapters dealing with sexual and reproductive problems connected with all major neurological disease entities. It is obvious that describing basically the same sexual disturbances in those with stroke, multiple sclerosis, SCI and six other main entities, the risk of repeating the same symptoms, examinations, tests and treatments in every chapter is high, and it does not look as if the editor has made a great effort to avoid this problem. The chapters on basic physiology are very basic as written for the interested layman. He will, however, be embarrassed by the near total lack of illustrations (11 figures and tables throughout the whole book). Five of these are concentrated in the best chapter: 'Sexual Dysfunctions Following Stroke', where you even find the most comprehensive review of the basic physiology.

The chapter on 'Sexual Rehabilitation Issues in Spinal Cord Injury' covers 9 pages (including one figure illustrating rectal probe insertion for electro-ejaculation), plus 18 references. Both male and female problems are well discussed, and fertility as a major part of neurorehabilita-

tion is taken into consideration. This chapter gives a fair description of symptoms and signs, and deals with the main treatment possibilities but does not point at any future developments. Some statements will surprise the reader: 'Most men (82–95%) with complete lesions report an ejaculation' (page 201). In my patients it is more likely to be the other way around.

Controversial statement can be found elsewhere:

'In females, orgasm consists of a series of uterine and pelvic muscle contractions' (page 113). Any clinician with SCI-female patients reporting orgasms knows that this is nonsense.

'Afferent stimuli of ejaculation are transmitted by the dorsal nerve of the penis' (page 115). Maybe, but stimulation of that nerve is not the best way of eliciting the ejaculation reflex.

The pathways for psychogenic erections through the thoraco-lumbar sympathetic nerves seem to be overlooked (page 4).

The references are numerous and fairly up to date. It is understandable that references from the USA are preferred, but when others are used, the names should be correctly spelled (page 118: Both Vinken and Bruyn are misspelled).

There is much useful information in this book, but the editor should have been more ruthless and cut the text to half of the present volume. When you then have to pay 100 dollars for this rather cheap production with very few illustrations, you will probably not have value for your money.

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