



Book Reviews

Sexual and Reproductive Neurohabilitation

Edited by Mindy Aisen

Publishers: Humana Press, New Jersey, USA. June 1997.
244pp. ISBN 0-89603-376-7 US\$99.50

There is a growing interest in the field of neuro-rehabilitation for sexual and reproductive problems. It reflects the importance of sexuality reported in numerous quality-of-life studies of neuro-injured patients.

The current book addresses 'all members of the rehabilitation team' referred in a long list from neurologist to social worker. The authors do that in a rather conventional way: The book starts with chapters on basic physiology and pathophysiology. The best part here is 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 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. 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 can find the most comprehensive review of 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 neurorehabilitation is taken into consideration. The chapter gives a fair description of symptoms and signs, 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 statements 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 US references are preferred, but when others are used, their names could be expected to be correctly spelled (page 118: Both Vinken and Bruyn are misspelled).

There is a lot of 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 for this rather cheap production with no illustrations, you will probably not have value for your money.

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Neck Pain: Medical Diagnosis and Comprehensive Management

By D. Borenstein, S. Wiesel and S. Boden

WB Saunders Company, 1996. ISBN 0-7216-5412-6

This volume was written as a natural progression from the authors' previous publication on Low Back Pain: Medical Diagnosis and Comprehensive Management. After reviewing the available texts, the authors felt there was a need for a companion text on neck pain, and this has now been produced both as a practical guide and a reference book.

An excellent introductory section on the anatomy and physiology of neck pain includes a concise account of the anatomy of the discs, ligaments, muscles and blood supply, a discussion on the biomechanics of the cervical spine, and an account of the epidemiology and sources of neck pain.

Clinical evaluation of neck pain follows in a logical sequence, and there are particularly useful sections on physical examination and radiographic evaluation.

Various diseases associated with neck pain are comprehensively covered, although no attempt is made to discuss spinal cord injury and disease resulting in tetraplegia.

There is too much emphasis on myelography as being the benchmark for evaluating neural compression within the spinal canal, even though good accounts of the use of CT and MRI are given.

Most chapters are subdivided into sections, each with their own references, and generally the text is very well presented.

There is a particularly useful ten page appendix, with a synopsis of the chief aspects of each disease entity.

It is important that, even for the readers of Spinal Cord chiefly involved in the management of Spinal Cord Injuries, a good understanding of spinal cord disease in general is necessary, and this book admirably fulfils this need.

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