Spinal Cord (1999) 37, 310

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Book Reviews

Physiotherapy for Respiratory and Cardiac Problems

Edited by JA Pryor & BA Webber
Publishers: Churchill Livingstone. £22.50. 524pp.
ISBN 0 443 05841 5

This book covers a wide range of topics and issues relevant to cardiopulmonary physiotherapy. The text would be suitable for all levels of therapists, from undergraduate students to experienced clinicians.

As with the first edition, the book is divided into two sections;
(i) Investigations, patients' problems and management;
(ii) The needs of specific patients.

New to this edition is an index at the beginning of each chapter (useful for quick reference), and chapters on non-invasive ventilation and pulmonary rehabilitation. Some chapters have been expanded, including a large section on musculoskeletal dysfunction under physiotherapy techniques.

The chapter on patient problems has useful tables for causes of the presenting problems and their subsequent management. There are several thought-provoking chapters including a compassionate look at care of the dying patient.

The book is generally well organised, although the reader may need to refer to several chapters in order to gain complete comprehension of a subject (eg:suction). With the exception of thoracic imaging, all chapters are referenced.

It is refreshing to have a textbook that emphasizes the importance of clinical effectiveness and outcomes. This is an essential component of todays healthcare.

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The Central Nervous System Structure and Function

Author: Per Brodal
Publishers: Oxford University Press. 675pp.
ISBN: 0 19 5117 41 7 £35.95

The understanding of neurology, and the teaching of neurology requires an anatomical foundation in order to base diagnosis on analysis of symptomatology, determination of the site of the lesion and the nature of the lesion. Without this, all that can be done is to teach the recognition of major syndromes without any background knowledge. Alf Brodal brought out a superb book in 1943 in Norwegian. The first English language edition was published in 1948 and the original plan was maintained in the English edition; correlating clinical symptoms with anatomical lesions and including physiological data wherever possible. The book was an immediate success and in 1969 a second edition was produced. By this time, Brodal's book 'Neurological Anatomy in Relation to Clinical Medicine' had become indispensable. Subsequently Per Brodal, Alf Brodal's son brought out 'The Central Nervous System, Structure and Function' and this present volume is the second edition. Several chapters have been re-organised to include new material and there are new chapters dealing with development, ageing and plasticity, and the basic properties of sensory receptors. New illustrations have been added and others have been re-drawn. There is a strong emphasis on function and, as a result, anatomical (including cellular and molecular) details are not included unless they can be related to function. The book contains 'boxes' which deal with more advanced clinical material and with subject in-depth.

It is an excellent book but it is not without its faults. For example, the extent of the spinal cord is given, at its lower level, as the upper margin of the second lumbar vertebrae but does not mention that the lower end may sometimes be found as high as the lower border of the twelfth thoracic vertebra or as low as the upper border of the third lumbar vertebrae. The author states that the understanding of how the various parts of the nervous system are inter-connected to form functional systems is one of his main objects. It is, therefore, rather surprising to find no mention of spinal shock.

This book bridges the gap between basic neurological sciences and clinical neurology and it performs this task extremely well but in many instances, it will still be necessary to turn to a classic text in neuroanatomy or neurophysiology or clinical neurology.

LS Illis