introduction to the topic of health-related quality of life.

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**Parkinson’s Disease and Movement Disorders: diagnosis and treatment guidelines for the practicing physician**

Edited by Charles H. Adler and J. Eric Ahlskog
Evidence over experience is the Zeitgeist, but this multi-author book bucks the trend. This fairly weighty volume consists of 35 didactic chapters arranged in sections comprising basic diagnostic principles, Parkinson’s disease, other akinetic rigid syndromes, hyperkinetic movement disorders and a miscellaneous section that includes a chapter on gait disorders.

The experience tack is robust since the authors are all eminent and respected American neurologists in the field of movement disorders. The approach to each subject is not exhaustive but rather is formulated as a tutorial. There are undoubted strengths in this strategy. Professor Ahlskog’s chapter on the approach to a patient with movement disorder is a clear and logical exposition of such principles. The chapters on akinetic rigid disorders other than Parkinson’s disease provide a sound grounding for further reading in an increasingly complex area.

Conversely, the didactic approach leads to several contentious statements, particularly in management issues. The dopamine agonists versus levodopa in early Parkinson’s disease debate is presented pretty squarely from the levodopa camp and the book does not emphasize the importance of age-associated morbidity as opposed to age itself, when deciding on treatment for an elderly person with Parkinson’s disease. The reader is left somewhat stranded since no references are provided to the recent dopamine agonist monotherapy studies. While this is fairly signposted at the beginning of the book (i.e. no exhaustive references, only selected reading), it does mean that many statements and some diagnostic criteria in the book go unrefereened.

Other cavils include the sketchy coverage of the contribution of vascular disease to parkinsonism and imitators in the elderly, as well as insufficient accent on the overlap and heterogeneity of neurodegenerative disease with ageing. All the cited support organizations are exclusively US-based, although some of the websites do have UK/European links.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, I think the good things outweigh the bad in this book. Geriatricians faced with more exotic movement disorders would find a succinct and friendly guide in the later chapters. Contributions such as Jim Maraganore’s incisive and concise approach to epidemiology and genetics of Parkinson’s disease would be a very useful refresher prior to a teaching session, although again providing two references from 1987 and 1992 is somewhat nugatory.

Other commendable chapters which would engage the multidisciplinary team setting out on a movement disorders service include those on sleep problems, cognitive disorders and depression, and general rehabilitation. The book is easy to navigate and it is pleasurable to browse through the self-contained contributions.

The target audience of this volume is broad, covering primary-care physicians, neurologists and gerontologists. I doubt if primary-care physicians in the UK, even those with elderly interests will be enticed, but both specialist parkinsonologists and general geriatricians would find this volume very useful. It represents reasonable value for money in today’s market. Faced with an explosion of textbooks, however, I think it should be viewed as a treasured luxury rather than a must-have ‘bread and butter’ bench book.

**GRAEME MACPHEE**
**Physician, Glasgow, UK**

**Care of the Elderly**

R. B. Shukla
This book aims to provide a wide readership with an outline of current geriatric practice. It is a synopsis of a previous and more detailed publication, which would probably be more suitable for a medical readership. The author has a highly individual style of writing, depending on anecdotes and extensive experience in geriatric medicine. Authorship is shared in several instances, with an outstanding contribution from Elaine Young on “the management of cancer in the elderly”.

The book forms a useful source of addresses for disease-support groups and has a number of simple checklists on subjects such as osteoporosis, falls and Mini Mental State Examination. This is the second edition of this book, which obviously fills a largely unmet niche in communicating basic geriatric practice and care to a more general audience.

**MARIANNE JAMES**
**Clinical Assistant, Royal Liverpool Hospital, Liverpool, UK**

**Making Sense of the Private Finance Initiative. Developing public–private partnerships**

Courtney A. Smith
Courtney Smith is an academic and professional economist, and an enthusiastic advocate of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and public–private partnerships. His book, with co-authors, is written mainly from a financial perspective, and through case studies and checklists aims at “guidance on key aspects of procurement