Parkinson’s Disease in the Older Patient

The appearance of this book reflects the fact that the majority of people with Parkinson’s disease are older and that being older with Parkinson’s disease represents a set of problems necessitating the input of a multi-disciplinary team. It is also a reflection of the fact that a very high proportion of people with Parkinson’s disease are now cared for by geriatricians rather than by neurologists and by teams led by geriatricians.

The creation of a text specifically about older people with Parkinson’s disease may seem somewhat arbitrary but standard neurological texts usually fail to deal with the full breadth of this disorder. It is the holistic approach brought by the Elderly Care Team which has led to their greater involvement with the care and support of this group and this is well represented in this text.

It is written by a multi-disciplinary group comprising academic and non-academic clinicians and is valuable at several levels. The chapters have clearly been written by clinicians with extensive experience of patients. It is up to date and fairly balanced in the controversial areas such as the use of dopamine agonists early in the disease. The text is excellently referenced and on the whole the references are easily accessible though references to proceedings of meetings cause a little frustration as in the case of the evidence around the economic benefits of Parkinson’s disease specialist nurses.

The breadth of this disorder in its effects on movement, balance, psychological state, autonomic function and communication as well as the effects on carers and the quality of life are amply brought out by contributions from such a wide range of specialists. Few texts will have such useful contributions on the role of remedial therapy and the organization of services. The complexity of therapy and recent advances are dealt with in what is a very comprehensive and yet very readable book. It provides a practical guide for clinicians and contains a lot, which cannot be obtained by those outside this specialist field and will serve as a very useful reference and source of further information through both the text and related references and the appendices.

It would be difficult to pick out individual chapters of particular value as each clinician reading this (and it should be read by all the professions) will have their own particular interests or areas where they wish to expand their knowledge. I was unable to find a weak chapter.

I would commend this excellent book, which is written in a very readable style in spite of needing to address really challenging topics such as autonomic function, the nature of the motor problems and the pathology and pathogenesis. The editing has clearly been thorough and thoughtful and the authors well directed.

It should be accessible to all members of the multi-disciplinary team and gives valuable inter-disciplinary insights which we would all benefit from reading to better understand the contributions which all the members of the team can make to the care of this complex disorder.

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