Book reviews

Queen Square Neurological Rehabilitation Series. Neurological Rehabilitation of Parkinson’s Disease
Dianne Playford

This book is succinct, up to date and strongly based on available evidence. Although not as comprehensive or as focused on the needs of the older patient as some other texts in this field, it has a sharp academic feel. The first chapter concentrates on the pharmacological management of Parkinson’s disease, which is clearly a necessary part of any rehabilitation management plan. The chapters on psychosocial and non-pharmacological therapies are well written and referenced. There is a chink of pure geriatrics in Dorothy Robertson’s chapter on ‘Developing and Delivering Services’. This chapter is characteristically lucid, making excellent use of the evidence available. The paradigm developed by Doug MacMahon and Sue Thomas is evident throughout this book.

The book ends with two contrasting chapters: a useful pragmatic review of measuring outcomes of rehabilitation and a blue skies chapter regarding strategies for rescuing, protecting or replacing dopaminergic neurones.

I found this text a stimulating read and can recommend it.

JEREMY PLAYFER
Royal Liverpool Hospital, Liverpool
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Caring for Someone with Depression
Toni Battison

It is humbling to know how many useful texts are available to make people better equipped to live with the difficulties that illness, disability or circumstance may bring to them. Toni Battison deals with depression in context and so goes far beyond the issues and practical considerations traditionally associated with the mood disorder per se. She equips the reader to deal with almost any aspect of depression, its causes and complications, when met in later life.

Fact boxes, listed bullet-points and quotations from professionals, patients and carers make for a punchy, engaging format to complement a sensible, balanced narrative. The potential for destroying a personal relationship, when its elements are re-designated within a self-conscious therapeutic/caring role, is a problem. Yet struggling on in ignorance may be even more destructive.

This book should be available to borrow or purchase through every clinic or ward where depressed older people and their families are receiving help.

DAVID JOLLEY
Dementiaplus and Wolverhampton University, Wolverhampton
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Handbook of Clinical Nutrition and Aging
Edited by C. Watkins Bales and C. Seel Richie

Cochrane on ‘older people after hip fracture’ found insufficient ‘evidence about the effects of nutritional supplementation’. Evidentialism necessitates high-quality evidence but taking care to feed hip fracture patients should be a good thing, they being generally undernourished. This handbook offers ‘strategies for understanding and managing’ the ‘many illnesses’ afflicting older people for which ‘good nutritional care will improve short- and long-term’ outcomes. Hip fracture is discussed thoughtfully.

Due prominence is given to cytokines and there are interesting references concerning feeding in dementia. But a book with 63 authors is bound to be uneven unless carefully edited. The chapter discussing sensory impairment has a table, 54 pages long, listing 266 drugs affecting taste, starting with 10 for AIDS/HIV. Poor indexing makes the nuggets hard to find. With such failure to see the wood for the trees being all too common, the book is more likely to encourage the doubters than to achieve its aims.

S. BRUCE
Conquest Hospital, East Sussex
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