Book reviews

The Stroke Book
M. T. Torbey and M. H. Selim

Given the importance of stroke in terms of its impact both clinically and financially, there are surprisingly few books available for clinicians. The book that any new title needs to compete against is Stroke: A Practical Guide to Management by Warlow et al., which is shortly to have its third edition published. The main problem with this book is that it is written from a North American perspective and does not reflect evidence-based practice as followed in the UK. For example, it recommends the routine use of stockings and low dose heparin for DVT prophylaxis which is contrary to NICE guidance, and it advises the use of mannitol for raised intracranial pressure after haemorrhage which may work but for which there is insufficient evidence. There are many other similar examples where following the recommendations in this book would lead to some raised eyebrows on the post-take ward round in UK hospitals. There are some useful chapters covering areas not often specifically addressed in other texts, such as the management of stroke on obstetric and gynaecology wards and paediatric stroke, but rehabilitation and longer term management is not covered at all. My advice is to save up your pennies for the new edition of the Warlow book.

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Biblical Perspectives on Aging: God and the Elderly
J. Gordon Harris

Harris is Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at North American Baptist Seminary. His book looks at most of the references to elderly people in the Old and New Testaments and associated literature. He uses close reading of the texts to analyse them from an anti-ageist perspective. He shows that much of the Bible prescribes honour and respect for elderly people. Where elderly people make mistakes that fit within the ‘senior moment’ stereotype, this is a warning not to follow them. The idea of God as an old man, the Ancient of Days with a head as white as lamb’s wool, arises in late Old Testament literature and the works written between the Old and the New. Harris comments: ‘White hair power reigns supreme in the messianic kingdom . . . White hair . . . represents the crowning achievement of the image of God.’ This book is valuable for Bible study but does not help those seeking an understanding of religious attitudes to elderly people in the UK. A book looking at the religious and associated social approaches to old age of all the different religious groups in the UK is much needed.

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Measurement Scales used in Elderly Care
Abhaya Gupta

Dr Gupta has shown excellent judgement in selecting measurement scales which would be of interest to busy geriatricians and in his practical recommendations about their use. Mobility, ADL, mood and cognition are covered well, as are scales for use in stroke and Parkinson’s disease, reflecting much of current practice in geriatric medicine. Readers will have to look elsewhere for reviews of scales for social functioning, carer well-being and end-of-life care. Most of the reviewed scales are reproduced with information about copyright restrictions where these apply.

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