Book reviews

National Clinical Guidelines for Stroke (Third Edition)


This is the third edition of the National Clinical Guidelines for Stroke and contains over 300 recommendations for Commissioners of stroke services, stroke service organisation, acute care, secondary prevention, recovery and rehabilitation and long-term care. It is designed for use by any member of the multi-disciplinary team involved with managing patients with strokes (TIA, stroke and subarachnoid haemorrhage) over the age of 16 from onset to death.

So what’s new in the Third Edition? Clearly the evidence has been updated from the Second Edition of the Guidelines, including the use of standard databases, current Cochrane systematic reviews and meta-analyses and relevant trial and study publications since the latest reviews. In addition, the recent National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Guidelines on the diagnosis and initial management of acute stroke, transient ischaemic attack are included verbatim, and full reference is made to important strategy documents including the National Stroke Strategy for England and the National Service Framework for long-term conditions.

One innovation trumpeted by the guidelines group is the highlighting of 21 key recommendations that if implemented would greatly enhance the quality of the United Kingdom stroke care. These recommendations were reached by a consensus of panel members voting on the importance of the topic rather than necessarily stating the strength of the evidence in the more formal fashion that one would expect of National Guidelines. For me, the lack of the usual gradings is a weakness, but nonetheless the publication continues to provide clear guidance for all professionals involved in the care of stroke patients across the duration of their stroke journey. Furthermore, a useful laminated concise guide, and a patient and carer document complete the set.

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Integrated Management of Depression in the Elderly


Dan Blazer, Professor of Psychiatry at Duke University, says there has never been a book like this before. It is a serious contribution to the literature, but presented in a way which is fun. Summary chapters reflect current orthodoxy in understanding late-life depression and best practice in its identification and treatment across the spectrum of Primary Care General Hospital-Specialist Psychiatry. These might be used as pullouts with checklists and evidence-base references. But the main joy comes from the utilisation of 11 case vignettes, 10 offered for comment to 25 experts within the UK and one to 27 leaders in the field from 12 countries across the globe. These commentaries are clinically based, but include appropriate reference sources. It is good to read what the great and good would do in the circumstances described. Surely these case summaries will find a place in teaching formats wherein we can describe how we would respond and learn by comparison.

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Dementia Care: A Practical Manual

Jonathan Waite, Rowan H. Harwood, Ian R. Morton and David J. Connelly


The need for people to know about dementia is colossal. To consider: there are about 700,000 people with dementia in the UK, millions worldwide. There are estimated to be about six million carers in the UK, many of whom support older people with dementia. Over 400,000 older people reside in UK care homes; two-thirds of these have dementia. The care home sector employs nearly half a million people. Just about