There is no doubt that Drs. Bashir and Whitaker have done a commendable job in writing a resource appropriate to their target audience. They have provided a comprehensive yet succinct text with very useful tables and practical information on the management of MS patients. It is often quite difficult for authors to gauge the degree of comprehensiveness of a handbook such as this, but the authors have managed to convey basic science principles underlying the pathogenesis of MS and combine this with day to day issues related to patient management to produce a valuable handbook.

Finally, I would like to note that Dr. Whitaker passed away shortly after completing this handbook. He was a well-known and internationally respected clinician/researcher and a colleague and friend to many of those in the field of MS. His many talents and skills certainly will not be forgotten.

Robert B. Bell
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Epilepsy: Patient and Family Guide. Second Edition. 2002. By Orrin Devinsky. Published by F.A. Davis Company. 434 pages. C$40.50 approx.

Approximately 60-70% of information and advice about epilepsy on the World Wide Web is incomplete, inaccurate or simply incompetent. Such potentially misleading information is a major source of concern for people with epilepsy who are seeking to understand their disorder. People with seizure disorders (and their families) need a source of information that is readable, reliable and credible. This book is such a source of information – and it does an excellent job in fulfilling this role. *Epilepsy: Patient and Family Guide* is an easy to read guide for patients and their families, enabling them to be conversant in the basic issues of epilepsy and to be active partners in maintaining their own quality of life. The first edition of this book was published in 1994 and this second edition has been substantially revised with many additions and improvements.

Epilepsy: Patient and Family Guide is 434 pages in length, containing a small number of black-and-white diagrams and photographs which suitably clarify and edify a number of important points. The text is divided into six parts, providing a comprehensive overview of epilepsy, targeting the layperson as its prime reader. Part 1 focuses on the biomedical aspects of epilepsy and presents fundamental facts about the brain, seizures, epilepsy and epileptic syndromes. Part 2 provides a discussion of the diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy, including discussions of first aid, drug therapy and surgical therapy. The section of surgical therapy is extremely well-written from the perspective of a patient seeking additional information and insights. Parts 3 and 4 deal with epilepsy in children and adults, respectively. The section on epilepsy in children progresses chronologically from infancy through to adolescence, and covers important issues such as education and "outgrowing epilepsy". The section on adults covers the years from young adulthood to the elderly, and delves into specialized topics such as pregnancy, menopause, parenting and employment. Part 5 is a brief discussion of the legal and financial issues of epilepsy; Part 6 is a list of resources for people with epilepsy. The book concludes with five appendices which provide a glossary of terms, and a list of possible drug-drug interactions.

Overall, this book is well-written and well-presented. The writing style is clear, concise and logical, and in general is quite readable from the point of view of a patients and/or a patient's family member. Most topics are covered in a comprehensive manner; for example, the section on seizure provoking factors covers sleep deprivation, alcohol/drug abuse, menstrual cycle, stress, over-the-counter drugs, travel across time zones, and even the phases of the moon. Most topics are discussed with just the right amount of detail – not too much, not too little. The section on Principles of Drug Therapy might be a little too information-rich; I asked several patients to read portions of this book and they found the discussions of drug half-lives and steady states to be too involved (however, they gave the remainder of the book – apart from Appendix 3 – two strenuous "thumbs up"). Appendix 3 is a comprehensive listing of drug-drug interactions, presenting data on such interactions as the influence of amiodarone on phenytoin levels. I found this appendix to be too confusing for a layperson and probably better suited for physicians than for patients and their families.

From a Canadian point of view, this book is written primarily for an American reader. For example, the section on legal issues is based on American law, while Appendix 4, which lists resources for people with epilepsy, does so from a purely American point of view. However, in his discussion of drugs for epilepsy, Devinsky does present data on both vigabatrin and clobazam, drugs available in Canada, but not the USA.

Overall, this is a very good book. It is factually sound and complete in the topics that it covers. The advice and information given in this book are practical, safe and mainstream. The book may be read either cover-to-cover or by reading only isolated chapters of particular interest. The writing style is straightforward and reader-friendly. Its strengths are many; its weaknesses are few. One can recommend this book with confidence to any patient asking for reading material about their epilepsy.

Donald F. Weaver
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Neurologic Complications of Critical Illness. Second Edition. 2001. By Eelco F.M. Wijdicks. Published by Oxford University Press. 415 pages. C$173.50 approx.

Neurocritical care has emerged as a relatively new branch of neurology that deals with acute, life-threatening and disabling disorders of the nervous system, whether the primary illness is neurological or systemic. Thus, by definition, neurocritical care covers a broad range of disorders of the central and peripheral nervous systems. Wijdicks has done a remarkable job in distilling this information into a single, comprehensive text. He critically reviews the clinical, laboratory and basic science aspects of the various topics and gives balanced advice based on evidence and his own practical experience. The book is succinct, well-written, well-illustrated and readable. The standardized format, well-designed tables and up-to-date key references are positive features. These are benefits of a single-authored text; only a remarkably knowledgeable and experienced clinician-scientist could pull it off so well.

The book contains 19 chapters, beginning with general topics: coma, drugs used in the intensive care unit, seizures in the intensive care unit, weakness and complications of invasive procedures. The next group focuses on more specific topics: bacterial infections,

sepsis, cardiac arrest, metabolic disorders, thrombotic and hemorrhagic disorders, vasculitis, pregnancy, aortic and cardiac surgery, environmental illness (heat and cold exposure, electrical injuries, near drowning), trauma and organ transplantation. The last, rather short section deals with outcome and decision-making, including withdrawal of care.

Wijdicks is, at times, dogmatic in his statements and I disagree with his assessment of the role of electrophysiological testing. Some differences exist between the Canadian and American approaches to brain death, e.g., the central role of etiology in Canada and the compulsory use of the CT head scan in the US. Space limitations require that some explanations and elaboration have to be sacrificed or curtailed.

Overall, it is a brilliantly thorough, useful and well-balanced monograph. I strongly recommend the book to all neurologists, including those in training, who see patients in emergency rooms and intensive care units. Intensives and emergency room physicians would also find it a helpful reference.

G. Bryan Young
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ADVANCES IN RESEARCH ON NEURODEGENERATION. VOLUME 7. 2000. Edited by Y. Mizuno, D.B. Calne, R. Horowski, W. Poewe, P. Riederer and M.B.H. Youdim. Published by Springer-Verlag/Wien. 214 pages. C$139.65 approx.

This book was published as the proceedings of the Seventh International Winter Conference on Neurodegeneration and Neuroinflammation held in January 2000 in Japan. Recent advances in the field have identified mechanisms common to both pathological processes such as the involvement of inflammatory changes, microglia, cytokines and apoptosis. These new developments provide a better understanding of pathological events and might provide key opportunities for the development of new therapies that could be applied to a wide range of diseases which involve similar mechanisms. In this aspect, the book presents a comprehensive review of the recent findings in this fascinating field of research. The book is comprised of seventeen chapters covering a wide range of topics from the genetics of Parkinson's disease to the mechanisms of tissue injury in multiple sclerosis and potential therapeutic modalities. While several chapters particularly emphasize the molecular aspects of neurodegeneration such as the involvement of caspases in cell death or the role of cytokines in autoimmune disorders and neuroinflammation, others deal with physiological aspects. Of particular note, the paper by Foley and Riederer proposes a revision of the model of human basal ganglia organization based on recent biochemical findings. Five of the articles deal with the various aspects of Parkinson's disease ranging from the genetic perspective to potential gene therapy using adeno-associated virus vectors thus providing an excellent overview of the ongoing research on this disorder. Most chapters are well-illustrated and well-documented with extensive references. Overall, this book represents a good introduction to the ongoing research on neuroinflammation and neurodegeneration as it captures the sense of intense research in these rapidly evolving fields.

André Toulouse and Guy A. Rouleau
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MIGRAINE: MANIFESTATIONS, PATHOGENESIS AND MANAGEMENT. Second Edition. 2002. Contemporary Neurology Series, Vol. 65. By Robert A Davidoff. Published by Oxford. 511 pages. C$156.00 approx.

Authors of headache books are usually researchers or clinicians with a special interest in headache and most also sufferer from the disorder. Dr. Davidoff is particularly well-qualified to write about migraine as he is a basic neuroscientist, neurophysiologist and an academic neurologist who treats headache patients. Furthermore, he claims a special interest from the fact that not only has he himself been a life-long migraineur but he comes from and lives with a family of migraineurs.

This is the second edition of Dr. Davidoff's monograph on headache. It is comprised of 26 chapters compared with 12 in the first edition. In addition to sections on epidemiology, clinical manifestations, investigations and management, there are excellent special sections on pathophysiology, and pathophysiology is emphasized throughout the book. Each chapter is well-referenced and the author has taken pains to include the most current literature as well as pivotal studies from the past.

What makes this book different from most headache monographs is the great pains that the author has taken to expose the physiology that underlies the basis for the migrainous condition. Some readers may find certain chapters to be excessively detailed but they reflect the author's viewpoint as a scientist with apparent insatiable curiosity. Nevertheless, I profited from the lucid description of channelopathies, of genetics and of biochemical and neurophysiology that one might not expect to find in a volume devoted to headache. Other chapters give detailed exposés of cerebral circulation and of related neurotransmitters. A chapter on female endocrine physiology provides an unusually detailed background for the better understanding of mechanisms underlying headache associated with fluctuations in the menstrual cycle.

Much of the additional new information in this volume focuses on newer understanding of serotonin mechanisms and the triptans. There is a very balanced and useful discussion of the role of serotonin, serotonin receptors and the medications that act on these receptors. While there is a detailed review of the role of triptans in therapy, Dr. Davidoff does not commit the common mistake of slavish devotion to advocating triptans as the only treatment for acute attacks. The review of prophylactic therapies is well-researched and there is a realistic appraisal of the limited benefit of most prophylactic medications available to date.

Throughout this monograph the author emphasizes that in spite of a vast amount of data gleaned from research and clinical observations most of our knowledge on headache mechanisms is still theoretic, circumstantial, and not founded on evidence-based medicine.

Lastly, despite an emphasis on scientific study, the sufferings of the migraineur are never far out of mind and only one who really suffers from the disorder himself could describe the suffering without being unnecessarily maudlin. Sections on the approach to the patient with headache are excellent.

Who should read this book? I would not think that many busy practitioners would turn to this 511-page volume, although they might find practical, if tedious, answers to many of their questions. Neurologists, especially those with a bent for wishing detailed explanations for clinical phenomena will find it a very worthwhile