

# Book Review

## ULTIMATE REVIEW FOR THE NEUROLOGY BOARDS

by Hubert H. Fernandez, Stephan Eisenschenk, Anthony T. Yachnis, and Michael S. Okun, 544 pp., Demos Medical Publishing, LLC, 2006, \$79.95

The Boards. Those two words evoke distant memories for seasoned neurologists and disquieting trepidation for soon-to-be graduating senior residents. In recent years, there has been a plethora of Board review books promising quick, concise reviews and guaranteeing success on the Boards. There are two Board exams for which to prepare, the written and the oral, each needing a different approach. Methods of preparation include long-term studying and short-term cramming.

*Ultimate Review for the Neurology Boards* by Fernandez et al. succeeds well at the long-term studying level, but it is the last book one should use immediately before the oral or written Boards. The book's primary strength is its comprehensiveness, with each major neurology topic (infections of the CNS, epilepsy, movement disorders, etc.) covered in great detail. There are many lists with topics presented in bullet-point formats. A given disease is described in a few sentences covering clinical presentation, laboratory testing, and brief treatment options, if available. But extensive pathophysiology or references are not provided.

The book works well for those gung-ho neurology residents who have read throughout residency, who thereby have a deep and widespread knowledge, and who need only to review a given topic. For those who have never studied a certain area, this book would probably not help, and it

will likely confuse these readers with the rapid onslaught of facts in bullet points. However, starting this book 6 months before the written Boards (as I wish I had) will definitely improve one's grade and increase knowledge in neurology (ultimately the goal of all of these tests). This is no small accomplishment for a review book, or even a regular textbook for that matter.

The level of detail in this book does not work for short-term preparation for the written Boards and is lacking material for the oral Boards. The Orals, composed of case vignettes and a live patient exam, are not covered in this book. Other review manuals cover successfully the give and take of case vignettes, but this book surprisingly does not. *Ultimate Review* considers its online preparation for the Orals superior, but I found this component the weakest. The case studies and "flashcards" (e.g., What is Lambert Eaton? A disease affecting the neuromuscular junction.) were simplistic, lacking detail, and surprisingly few, leaving many areas untouched. The book's relative lack of pictures and illustrations was also a problem, especially when studying stroke, histology, pathology, and neuroanatomy.

Overall, *Ultimate Review for the Neurology Boards* is a welcome addition to the growing field of Board review books and can be useful in the proper hands. It would definitely not be recommended as for a review for the Orals, though it appears that will not be an issue for much longer, as the traditional Oral Board format is being eliminated.

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