Media and Book Reviews

CLINICAL NEUROLOGY AND NEUROANATOMY: A LOCALIZATION-BASED APPROACH, FIRST EDITION

By Aaron L. Berkowitz, 336 pp., McGraw-Hill Education/Medical, 2016, \$75

Dr. Berkowitz, a clinical neurologist and gifted teacher, sought to write a clinical neurology textbook that could condense clinical neuroanatomy and clinical neurology into a concise, easily digestible format, a feat in which he has succeeded. Dr Berkowitz's approach to summarizing clinical neurology in just over 300 pages is unique compared to other similar-sized texts in that it is both pragmatic and of sufficient detail to serve as a primary reference text for the neurology resident, enthusiastic medical student, neurologist reviewing for the recertification examination, or interested general internist.

The textbook adopts a refreshing layout to understanding clinical neurology and relevant neuroanatomy. Part 1 offers a high-yield, focused discussion of clinical neuroanatomy in approximately 150 pages. In part 2, the individual diseases of the nervous system are distilled into 14 concise chapters, full of clinical pearls and practical advice for the reader. Throughout the text, Dr. Berkowitz adopts an enjoyable narrative style, making the reader feel as if he or she is being directly spoken to by the author.

Many of the chapters include high-quality illustrations and figures from the author's own case records. For example, chapter 7 provides figures of various arterial territory infarct patterns, reinforcing the in-text descriptions, while chapter 19 includes useful imaging examples of both common (e.g., the crescent appearance of internal carotid artery dissection and hypoxic-ischemic injury post cardiac arrest) and rarer neurologic conditions (e.g., cerebral autosomal dominant arteriopathy with subcortical infarcts and leukoencephalopathy and cerebral amyloid angiopathy-related inflammation). The additional emphasis on relevant neuroimaging in each of the chapters is a unique feature, and sets this text apart from other similarly sized texts.

The high point of this book is the author's ability to explain concepts logically and practically, using clear language that gets straight to the point, something that is often missing in other texts. This is exemplified in the author's approach to explaining clinically relevant brainstem and cranial nerve anatomy in chapters 9 through 14. Particular highlights in Berkowitz's text include his "rules of thumb" approach to the 5 general categories of brainstem structures and their basic medial-lateral and dorsal-ventral arrangement in chapter 9, his explanation of horizontal gaze control including a high-yield table summarizing abnormalities of gaze in chapter 11, and his clinically oriented approach to vertigo and nystagmus in chapter 12, which focuses on logically applying physiologic principles to the bedside diagnosis. The scattered memory aids throughout the book further complement the easy readability of this text. For example, in chapter 16 the author employs a mnemonic "rule of threes" to construct the brachial plexus, focusing on understanding through clever memory techniques rather than through rote memorization.

One drawback of this book is the absence of chapters dedicated to pediatric neurology. Chapter 18 does provide a useful summary of pediatric epilepsy syndromes and chapter 31 summarizes leukodystrophies and mitochondrial disorders. However, while the level of detail is sufficient for a broad overview, one would likely need to refer to more detailed sources for in-depth clinical discussion or when reviewing pediatric neurology for the boards.

Dr. Berkowitz's textbook of clinical neuroanatomy and neurology provides an excellent resource for the neurology resident, and fills an important niche among the existing selection of available reading materials.

Reviewed by Emer R. McGrath, MB, PhD

Disclosure: E. McGrath knows the author of the book. Go to Neurology.org for full disclosures.

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