

## Book review

**Appleton, R. and Marson, A.** 2009: *Epilepsy: the facts*, third edition. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. 186 pp, £9.99 paperback. ISBN: 9780199233687

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First impressions often count and when you spot that the authors are not only renowned clinical epileptologists but also internationally acclaimed researchers into epilepsy care, you sense that this book is going to be good from the start. It successfully delivers too with its remit to inform not only people with epilepsy but also their family and carers and also members of the nursing, teaching and social work professions.

The opening chapter sets the scene and defines epilepsy clearly with the second chapter describing basic anatomy and pathology relating to epilepsy. It then takes the reader through the process of understanding seizure types and how merging recognizable clusters of symptoms with clues from the patient's history leads to the classification of various epilepsy syndromes. This chapter is tightly packed and possibly will need to be read at a slower pace by those with little previous knowledge of epilepsy.

Following on from this is an interesting chapter that lays out the acquired and genetic causes of epilepsy. Using many illustrations and tables, it discusses how the likely causation of attacks can change throughout one's life. From here it moves on to diagnosis and offers the reader an insight into history taking and its importance in helping distinguish between the different causes of transient loss of consciousness. The next chapter covers the investigation of seizures and is richly illustrated with copies of brain scans and EEGs. Although this chapter has a particularly paediatric

focus, it should prove to be a valuable reference point for healthcare professionals.

There follows a review of treatment including the range of anticonvulsants commonly used and an insight given into the rationale for their use. Dietary manipulation and surgery are also touched on and where they are placed in the management of epilepsy. The long-term outlook for epilepsy once more has quite a paediatric bias and paints an optimistic outlook for eventually coming off anticonvulsant medication. There is only one line given in this chapter, however, to driving considerations and for adults it would perhaps have been helpful to discuss it here more fully; however, the loss of driving is dealt with fully in the next chapter.

Chapter 9 comes as something of an appendix to the main body of the book and describes very clearly the difference between febrile convulsions and epilepsy as well as how they are treated. For any parent who has a child who suffers from these, I would imagine that this chapter alone would be enough reason to have this book in their home library.

It concludes with a look into the future of epilepsy care and also a healthy push for more research with the last words coming in the form of a patient's story. For a book with a remit that includes informing people with epilepsy, this seems a natural way to close the book and indeed one that ends on a very positive note.

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