Osborn AG, Ross, Crim J, Salzman K, Blaser S: *Expert differential diagnoses: brain and spine*

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Review

Amirsys have added to their extensive catalogue a new volume in the *Expert Differential Diagnosis* series, covering the neuraxis.

The format of this book is quite different from traditional medical texts. It is arranged by broad anatomical categories and then by specific anatomical site, generic imaging patterns and modality-specific findings, such as 'periventricular calcification' or 'large ventricles'. The layout consists for each clinical scenario of a double page of bullet-pointed text, usually with two images of the most important differential diagnoses. A further double page or more of the other differential diagnoses, with some annotation, follows. Common, less common and rare but important diagnoses are all discussed and the authors have taken advantage of their extensive image database to provide multiple examples. They have also persisted with the idiosyncratic indexing system that will be familiar to anyone who has used the Diagnostic Imaging Series, although in my experience it has little to recommend it over more traditional forms.

The large majority of images are MR and image quality in general is very good. The images are a little small, but this is necessary to accommodate the quantity of information presented within a reasonably sized volume.

This book is, in some ways, a spiritual successor to '*Magnetic Resonance Imaging of CNS Disease*' by Douglas Yock, a reporting station vade mecum for many neuroradiologists. That book is sadly out of print (and commanding impressively inflated prices on the second-hand market). Although the current publication contains considerably more factual information (and perhaps because of this), it does not quite achieve the clarity and lucidity of Yock. A contraction of some of the differential diagnoses would have resulted in a less universally comprehensive but more focussed text. The purchaser does however also receive an access code for Amirys eBook Advantage™, a searchable internet database of the information contained within the book. In this electronic format information is more successfully accessed and utilised, particularly if your PACS reporting station allows internet access. The opportunity for real-time 'decision support' when reading difficult cases offers significant added value to this purchase.

This volume is intended to be a diagnostic reference guide for the reporting radiologist, and it largely succeeds, particularly in digital form. If you are comfortable with the style and layout of the Diagnostic Imaging Series then this will be a worthwhile addition to the shelf, and is a useful volume to have available in any reporting room library.

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