Book Reviews

Each review consists of three sections, each to be graded on a four star scale, with no stars being awarded for works that are of no real value, four stars being awarded for works that are clearly first rate. Two stars will be the average award. Each sections will also include a brief narrative review. Specifically, Content will comment on the subject matter of the book, remarking on any major omission or calling attention to particular strengths, including original material. Style will be a commentary on readability (including the author's flair), grammar, use of tables, radiographs and the like. Lastly, Utility will comment on the target audience, the applicability of the text to clinical/bench work, and the place the work has in the overall scheme of critical care neurology.

This format was designed to give a clear picture of what can be gleaned from the book. The star system will give a quick overview of the text and what, if any, are its outstanding qualities. Using this system will, I hope, give quick guidance to those considering purchasing reviewed texts.

Christopher Commichau
(Neurocrit. Care 2005;2:218)

Palliative Care in Neurology (Contemporary Neurology Series)

Raymond Voltz, et al.

Pages: 416

Oxford University Press, 2004

ISBN #: 0198508433

Price: \$120.00

Reviewer: Eelco F. M. Wijdicks M.D.

Content * * * *

This is a very important edition to the *Contemporary Neurology Series* currently published by Oxford University Press. The editors have recruited many physicians and other health care workers experienced in the care of the dying neurologic patient. The book is, as expected in this series, comprehensive, and discusses management of symptoms most of them associated with more chronic neurologic disease. This includes management of dysphagia, pain, nausea and vomiting, fatigue, acute confusional states, respiratory symptoms, bowel symptoms, and urological and psychiatric symptoms. Care in specific disorders is also addressed in a separate part of the book, and the book closes with all relevant ethical issues associated with palliative care. Part III on *Common Symptoms* is probably the most useful part of the book and alone justifies its purchase. Some chapters are less well developed including the chapter on *Neurological Emergencies*. The chapters co-authored by Foley are, as always, required reading, and the same applies to Bernat's chapters on *Refusal and Withdrawal of Treatment and Informed Consent*.

Style * * * *

The book is well organized and has sufficient tables and algorithms. The book is relatively sparse in figures and is

sprinkled with splenetic Robert Pope paintings. It is clear that the authors have thought out some practical concerns with taking care of difficult to manage symptoms. There is a table on management of status epilepticus in a non-ICU setting, for example. I was a bit concerned about the large differences in style, and in some chapters, the information provided is very basic and known to most neurologists. In a next edition the editors should flesh out prognosticators of poor outcome ("all hope lost") in separate disorders and consider evidentiary tables.

Utility * * * *

I would rather review a book entitled "Curative Neurology," but this first comprehensive and practical book on palliative care in neurology is essential reading for the neurointensivist. A keenly frustrating part of our work is to provide withdrawal of support in the most compassionate way. This book provides all that is needed to do that.

Erratum: Neurocritical Care, volume 2, no. 1, February 2005

In *Neurocritical Care*, volume 2, no. 1, February 2005, on page 43 the authors' affiliations should read as:

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