

# Book & New Media Reviews



## Neural Therapy: Applied Neurophysiology and Other Topics

Robert F. Kidd. Custom Printers, 2005. 224 pages. \$79.95 USD. ISBN 0-9737800-0-2. Website: neural-therapybook.com

Neural therapy has been a vital addition to my pain practice for a number of years. Developed in Germany over 75 years ago, its theory and practice have evolved considerably since the Huneke brothers first coined the term.

The field of neural therapy began with the realization that procaine had beneficial effects that far outlasted its duration of action. This clinical experience led to a new understanding of the autonomic nervous system. The reader discovers that the contents of neural therapy are really a tool, easily learned, which allow detection and treatment of dysfunctions of the autonomic nervous system including those related to pain.

The one major text on neural therapy translated into English (the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Peter Dosch's Manual of Neural Therapy According to Huneke) is now over 20 years old. Unfortunately, the publisher has decided against an updated English edition.

This makes Canadian Robert Kidd's work even more valuable as an English reference on neural therapy. Dr. Kidd graduated from McGill in 1970 and initially practiced emergency medicine. His quest for answers to untreatable problems in allopathic medicine took him down a course of discovery in manipulative medicine, osteopathy, homeopathy and naturopathy. Although the text is intended as an introduction to neural therapy for the average general physician, it has applications to the practice of anesthesiology. The text is concise and its twelve chapters logically flow through the scientific basis and practice of neural therapy to factors, which limit its effectiveness including nutrition, dentistry and toxicology. These additions to the practice of neural therapy, not seen in Dosch's text, are invaluable and add to the efficacy of this therapeutic technique.

Chronic pain is experienced by up to 50% of patients following such surgeries as thoracotomy, mastectomy, and limb amputation. Recent literature suggests hyperalgesia after surgery can occur either

due to nervous system sensitization by surgical nociception or as an effect of anesthetic drugs (narcotics and inhaled agents). Such limitations prompt the search for new approaches to managing pain. Neural Therapy: Applied Neurophysiology and Other Topics presents to physicians in North America what is considered by many to be an alternative, integrative or complementary approach to treating pain. Regardless of whether or not our practice of anesthesia involves pain clinic work, neural therapy presents options for the care of our patients in and out of the operating room. Unfortunately, this is only an introductory text, leaving the reader with unanswered questions if looking for more detail. Additional resources are listed, but are minimal as this remains a relatively new therapy in North America.

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## Emerging Strategies for the Treatment of Neuropathic Pain

James N. Campbell, Allan I. Basbaum, André Dray, Ronald Dubner, Robert H. Dworkin, Christine N. Sang. IASP Press, 2006 hardbound, 512 pages, 32 figures, 12 tables. US \$80.00 [IASP members - US \$64.00] ISBN 0-931092-61-2

This monograph represents the outcome of a novel think-thank conference involving researchers from the academic sector and industry leaders, and was written by pain researchers specialists

The conference was held in Scottsdale, Arizona and took place over a five-day period in April 2005. Materials from the lectures presented at the meeting form the background information for this text. Specialists were divided into four groups, and the topics reviewed by each group reflect four current themes for drug development: 1) peripheral nervous system targets; 2) central nervous system targets; 3) disease-specific targets; and 4) development of measurement tools and application of new technologies. The materials present both the current state of knowledge and clinical practice in each of these domains, as well as a blue print for what is expected in the future.

The monograph contains 23 chapters divided into four parts. The first chapter in part I reviews the peripheral nervous system and its mechanisms, as well the common terminology of neuropathic pain including spontaneous pain, allodynia, hyperalgesia and hyperpathia. Related disease processes, including their cellular and molecular mechanisms, are elucidated. The role of sodium and potassium channels, neurotrophic factors, molecular changes in injured and uninjured afferent nerve fibers and protein trafficking are discussed. Finally, the role and limitations of animal experimentation and human surrogate models are reviewed.

Chapter 2 is an excellent chapter dealing with peripheral nerve generators of neuropathic pain. The author emphasizes the difference between excitation and excitability in the interpretation of neuropathic pain. An important table in this section clearly summarizes pain processes, potential target processes, potential target receptors and examples of target molecules.

Receptors are identified as possible targets for treatment. The concept of sensitization is presented in chapter 3, while chapter 4 discusses the possible role of sensitized, but otherwise normal primary afferents, in the genesis of neuropathic pain.

The second part of the monograph reviews the possible contribution of higher structures such as the brain and spinal cord, and the modulatory effects of the descending pathways. The activation of the neuroimmune system and the role of opioids are also discussed. Part three explores the poorly understood but strong link between depression and neuropathic pain. Growth factors, the inflammatory system and infectious neuropathies are also reviewed. Finally, part four of the monograph discusses the limitations of available animal models in reflecting the emotional aspects of pain, and the need to create ethical human paradigms. Imaging tools and their limitations are also covered.

In conclusion, this book was written by scientists who are leaders in their respective fields of neuropathic pain. Readers are presented with the very latest knowledge on neuropathic pain in a contextual framework which integrates recent findings into a larger and meaningful clinical context.

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