Epilepsy and Intellectual Disabilities

Vee P. Prasher • Mike P. Kerr
Editors

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Springer

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*To
Members of our beloved family:
Patrick, Matthew, Thomas, Ajay, Anisha,
and Anjuna*

Foreword

Ameliorating the impact of epilepsy and its treatment remains a substantial challenge for individuals with the condition and their families. The challenge however is even greater when the individual has the dual disability of epilepsy and an intellectual disability. It is universally accepted that the occurrence of seizures in a person with intellectual disabilities usually requires a greater degree of understanding of the diagnostic and treatment issues by the treating psychiatrist or neurologist. Recent advances in drug and non-drug treatments, genetics, imaging techniques and a multi-disciplinary approach to service delivery have led to dramatic improvements in the quality of the lives of persons with intellectual disabilities who have seizures.

A number of books are available on the association between intellectual disabilities and epilepsy. However, *Epilepsy and Intellectual Disabilities* is the first book to give a primarily intellectual disabilities perspective on this issue. Rather than merely focusing on the seizure disorder per se, this book highlights other complex and interconnected issues of associated cognitive impairment, effects on personality and increased incidence of mental and physical health problems. In my opinion, this book fills a gap in scientific literature.

The editors of *Epilepsy and Intellectual Disabilities* are to be congratulated for bringing together a group of internationally renowned experts in the field to share their knowledge and experience of working with people with epilepsy and intellectual disability. Their effort has culminated in this excellent book, which brings together decades of research aiming to provide an up-to-date perspective on the clinical issues of managing seizures in this vulnerable group of society.

I have no doubt that this book will for many years to come become obligatory reading for professionals managing epilepsy and intellectual disabilities. I commend the editors and wish them all success with their book *Epilepsy and Intellectual Disabilities*.

Gus A. Baker, PhD FBPoS
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Preface

This book brings together findings from research and clinical practice with a multidisciplinary perspective on important aspects of epilepsy in persons with intellectual disabilities. It is important for professionals involved in the care of persons with intellectual disabilities and epilepsy to have a comprehensive understanding of the essential research and clinical issues. Academic books can often lose the vision of a person-centered approach. Clinical practitioners, on the other hand, may not always have the most up-to-date relevant knowledge to provide the appropriate care. This book is intended to fill this gap.

Further, in this book the significant research and clinical aspects of epilepsy in the general population are included and put into a relevant context for persons with intellectual disabilities. Undoubtedly, research and clinical practice are much more advanced for the general population than for persons with intellectual disabilities. It is therefore important that professionals and academics in the field of intellectual disabilities be made fully aware of ongoing developments in the general population, which will more likely than not become important to the intellectually disabled population.

Epilepsy in the intellectually disabled population cannot be discussed as just a disease entity *per se*. The impact on the persons and on their caregivers always needs to be taken into account. Caring for adults with intellectual disabilities who develop epilepsy requires a multidisciplinary approach.

In this book the term *intellectual disabilities* has been used throughout the text. The term has yet to gain universal acceptance, and we are aware that other terms with similar meanings are used throughout the world. For example, the terms *mental retardation*, *learning disabilities*, *mental handicap*, *developmental disability*, or *intellectual handicap* (or variants) are in use in other nations. In this book *intellectual disabilities* is synonymous with these other terms.

Acknowledgment

We are indebted to the many learned clinicians and researchers who have so generously contributed to this book. Without their support and contribution the book *Epilepsy and Intellectual Disabilities* would not exist.

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