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EARLY DETECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF CEREBRAL PALSY

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To

ANITA LORING

for her dedication to the work of the
International Cerebral Palsy Society

PREFACE

At the end of September 1984 Dr. M. Veličkovič and Prof. H. Prechtel with the help of the International Cerebral Palsy Society organized an international conference on "New developments in the assessment of early brain damage" in Bled, Yugoslavia. I was invited as a speaker at this conference and I went there, curious, but without too much knowledge about the central theme: cerebral palsy.

During the conference and a satellite meeting I became impressed by the quality of various contributions and also by the great variety of problems related to the etiology, early diagnosis, management and psychosocial aspects of cerebral palsy.

Today, in many areas of biology and medicine, progress seems to require concentration on a very narrow field. As a consequence many conferences are highly specialized and most (young) scientists rightly consider this as most useful for their own work.

On the other hand the care of patients and counselling of parents and other close relatives require a multidisciplinary approach. Also, advances in the study of complicated unresolved medical biological problems are often made unexpectedly by using ideas, theories, approaches or methods from other disciplines.

In this context I thought it might be useful to collect a number of updated articles written by distinguished experts in very different areas, present at Bled conference. Once the various contributors agreed it was logical to ask the main organizers as the editors and to dedicate the book to Anita Loring who spends so much of her energy and time as a secretary general of the International Cerebral Palsy Society. Since I had done most of the organizing work for this book the publisher thought I should act as an editor as well: a layman behaving as an expert as is so often the case in society!

Nevertheless I am happy with this book because it contains chapters on the epidemiology and genetic aspects of cerebral palsy, prenatal- and perinatal risks and the early detection of neurological abnormalities, visual impairment and speech and language disorders. But it also provides information about the management and daily handling of a handicapped child and about important aspects of parenting behaviour, mother-child relationships and the attitude of society towards the handicapped. We hope that this compilation will be of interest to general physicians, obstetricians, pediatricians, neurologists, physiotherapists, psychosocial experts and all those others confronted with the problem of cerebral palsy which still influences the life of so many people.

H. Galjaard

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