perfusion imaging, or, use of MRI in situations like acute spinal trauma. Even current sequences, like FLAIR, or single-shot fast-spin echo are not mentioned in the text.

There are several errors in the images – e.g. a deep parietal tumor is termed a plexus papilloma, a suprasellar cistern mass is termed a colloidal cyst – the displaced third ventricle is seen well on the T1 coronal image included, and a jugular fossa/petrous bone mass is termed a meningioma (when the favoured diagnosis would be glomus jugulare). In a book detailing the typical appearance of these tumors, this would not be representative. Similarly, there are personal cases described e.g. residual pituitary macroadenoma, and post-meningioma follow-up in the section on MR controls following therapy (meaning postoperative follow-up). Several errors of spelling were also seen.

Several outmoded techniques were mentioned, such as tomography of the IAC. The mention of techniques such as gas cisternography is not felt to be current, especially in a book on MRI. Similarly, some of the mentioned uses of angiography e.g. venous sinus thrombosis, are outdated, or have been superseded by MRA. The section on spinal trauma describes the use of plain films.

The section on pediatric imaging is scanty, with nine images, and ten pages of text. For a supposedly current text, the image quality is poor – there are very noisy spinal images, and several low-flip angle gradient echo images are shown that are not representative of images obtainable with current scanners. As well, multi-coil images are not included or described in the section on spinal imaging.

In summary then, I would not recommend this book for purchase or reference.

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**THE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHIES.** 2001. Edited by Alan E.H. Emery. Published by Oxford University Press. 304 pages. C$184.50 approx.

The Editor is a veteran scientist and practitioner in the field of clinical genetics. He has made many valuable contributions in this field, and a fascinating form of muscular dystrophy bears his name (Emery-Dreifuss dystrophy). His well-known dedication to, and familiarity with, the field of myology is reflected by this book.

Myology, perhaps more than most other fields of medicine, has greatly benefited from the momentous advancement of molecular science. Therefore, it is a particularly rewarding area in which to write updates. Indeed, this feature is very evident throughout the book. The Editor's introductory chapter appropriately highlights and emphasizes this aspect of myology. The various disease entities are grouped into traditional categories. Thus, we have chapters on congenital muscular dystrophies, Duchenne dystrophy, Becker dystrophy, Emery-Dreifuss myopathy, the limb girdle dystrophies, fascioscapulchumeral dystrophy, distal myopathies and oculopharyngeal dystrophy. The clinical phenotypes, molecular background, pathology, and investigative techniques are well-outlined. The literature review is up-to-date. Special chapters are devoted to management and treatment modalities. Since this is a multi-author book, there is considerable variability of the overall caliber of the various chapters. Duchenne muscular dystrophy, which is the work of the Editor, stands out as a particularly well-written chapter.

This book does not pretend to be an academic masterpiece with profound scientific details about pathophysiology and spectacular microscopic illustrations. However, it is a very useful and concise as well as up-to-date text that contains sufficient modern and practical information for various specialists and students. They will find it user-friendly and cost-effective in everyday practice, and in preparing for qualifying examinations.

*George Karpati*
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**HANDBOOKOF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS.** 2002. By Khurram Bashir and John N. Whitaker. Published by Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. 248 pages. C$64.00 approx.

This handbook is directed towards individuals who need "an efficient introduction, a rapid review, or an accessible reference to the various aspects of multiple sclerosis". The authors are well-respected clinician/researchers who have provided a comprehensive handbook relating to multiple aspects of MS, including the following: classification of demyelinating disease, historical aspects, epidemiology and genetics, pathology and pathogenesis, clinical symptoms and signs, diagnosis, management, special situations, and a number of valuable appendices outlining measurement tools for disability or impairment.

The text is not formally referenced, however, suggested reading lists at the end of each chapter are provided. I was pleased to see that the new diagnostic (McDonald) criteria are described and discussed. There is a very good section on basic immunology of MS as well as comments related to new MRI imaging technologies, such as magnetic resonance spectroscopy and magnetization ratios. Included in the text are many tables and diagrams, including some schema that adequately depict aspects of pathogenesis and pathology as well as treatment approaches. There are MRIs that are well-reproduced and demonstrate some of the MRI features of this disease. Much of the text is in point form, which is quite easy to read. There is a very interesting section on management of MS symptoms and considerable detail is also given to disease course modifying therapies relating to the level of evidence that supports these.

My criticisms regarding this handbook are only minor. I would have liked to see a more complete discussion regarding the role of axonal injury in the pathology and pathogenesis of MS, as this is an area that has come under increasing scrutiny over the last several years. There is, indeed, now felt to be a neurodegenerative element of MS and how this is related to inflammation is yet uncertain. The section on genetics is certainly very cursory and there is no discussion on the complex nature of the genetics of MS, or the difficulties inherent in identifying susceptibility genes. This is an area of intense interest and the focus of considerable MS research at present. There is no significant detail given to the natural history of MS, which is information necessary and required for the analysis of clinical trial data. There are some misleading statements regarding disease course modifying therapy in MS, most particularly the effect of interferon beta 1A (Avonex) on secondary progressive MS. Certainly, in relation to the discussion of clinical trials, it would have been very useful to reference this material directly rather than to provide a reading list. The Handbook of Multiple Sclerosis is written in extremely small print in a manner that is quite difficult to read. It would have been better formatted in larger type and in normal textbook size.

There is no doubt that Drs. Bashir and Whitaker have done a commendable job in writing a resource appropriate to their target audience. They have provided a comprehensive yet succinct text with very useful tables and practical information on the management of MS patients. It is often quite difficult for authors to gauge the degree of comprehensiveness of a handbook such as this, but the authors have managed to convey basic science principles underlying the pathogenesis of MS and combine this with day to day issues related to patient management to produce a valuable handbook.

Finally, I would like to note that Dr. Whitaker passed away shortly after completing this handbook. He was a well-known and internationally respected clinician/researcher and a colleague and friend to many of those in the field of MS. His many talents and skills certainly will not be forgotten.

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**Epilepsy: Patient and Family Guide.** Second Edition. 2002. By Orrin Devinsky. Published by F.A. Davis Company. 434 pages. C$40.50 approx.

Approximately 60-70% of information and advice about epilepsy on the World Wide Web is incomplete, inaccurate or simply incompetent. Such potentially misleading information is a major source of concern for people with epilepsy who are seeking to understand their disorder. People with seizure disorders (and their families) need a source of information that is readable, reliable and credible. This book is such a source of information – and it does an excellent job in fulfilling this role. *Epilepsy: Patient and Family Guide* is an easy to read guide for patients and their families, enabling them to be conversant in the basic issues of epilepsy and to be active partners in maintaining their own quality of life. The first edition of this book was published in 1994 and this second edition has been substantially revised with many additions and improvements.

*Epilepsy: Patient and Family Guide* is 434 pages in length, containing a small number of black-and-white diagrams and photographs which suitably clarify and edify a number of important points. The text is divided into six parts, providing a comprehensive overview of epilepsy, targeting the layperson as its prime reader. Part 1 focuses on the biomedical aspects of epilepsy and presents fundamental facts about the brain, seizures, epilepsy and epileptic syndromes. Part 2 provides a discussion of the diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy, including discussions of first aid, drug therapy and surgical therapy. The section of surgical therapy is extremely well-written from the perspective of a patient seeking additional information and insights. Parts 3 and 4 deal with epilepsy in children and adults, respectively. The section on epilepsy in children progresses chronologically from infancy through to adolescence, and covers important issues such as education and "outgrowing epilepsy". The section on adults covers the years from young adulthood to the elderly, and delves into specialized topics such as pregnancy, menopause, parenting and employment. Part 5 is a brief discussion of the legal and financial issues of epilepsy; Part 6 is a list of resources for people with epilepsy. The book concludes with five appendices which provide a glossary of terms, and a list of possible drug-drug interactions.

Overall, this book is well-written and well-presented. The writing style is clear, concise and logical, and in general is quite readable from the point of view of a patients and/or a patient's family member. Most topics are covered in a comprehensive manner; for example, the section on seizure provoking factors covers sleep deprivation, alcohol/drug abuse, menstrual cycle, stress, over-the-counter drugs, travel across time zones, and even the phases of the moon. Most topics are discussed with just the right amount of detail – not too much, not too little. The section on Principles of Drug Therapy might be a little too information-rich; I asked several patients to read portions of this book and they found the discussions of drug half-lives and steady states to be too involved (however, they gave the remainder of the book – apart from Appendix 3 – two strenuous "thumbs up"). Appendix 3 is a comprehensive listing of drug-drug interactions, presenting data on such interactions as the influence of amiodarone on phenytoin levels. I found this appendix to be too confusing for a layperson and probably better suited for physicians than for patients and their families.

From a Canadian point of view, this book is written primarily for an American reader. For example, the section on legal issues is based on American law, while Appendix 4, which lists resources for people with epilepsy, does so from a purely American point of view. However, in his discussion of drugs for epilepsy, Devinsky does present data on both vigabatrin and clobazam, drugs available in Canada, but not the USA.

Overall, this is a very good book. It is factually sound and complete in the topics that it covers. The advice and information given in this book are practical, safe and mainstream. The book may be read either cover-to-cover or by reading only isolated chapters of particular interest. The writing style is straightforward and reader-friendly. Its strengths are many; its weaknesses are few. One can recommend this book with confidence to any patient asking for reading material about their epilepsy.

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**Neurologic Complications of Critical Illness.** Second Edition. 2001. By Eelco F.M. Wijdicks. Published by Oxford University Press. 415 pages. C$173.50 approx.

Neurocritical care has emerged as a relatively new branch of neurology that deals with acute, life-threatening and disabling disorders of the nervous system, whether the primary illness is neurological or systemic. Thus, by definition, neurocritical care covers a broad range of disorders of the central and peripheral nervous systems. Wijdicks has done a remarkable job in distilling this information into a single, comprehensive text. He critically reviews the clinical, laboratory and basic science aspects of the various topics and gives balanced advice based on evidence and his own practical experience. The book is succinct, well-written, well-illustrated and readable. The standardized format, well-designed tables and up-to-date key references are positive features. These are benefits of a single-authored text; only a remarkably knowledgeable and experienced clinician-scientist could pull it off so well.

The book contains 19 chapters, beginning with general topics: coma, drugs used in the intensive care unit, seizures in the intensive care unit, weakness and complications of invasive procedures. The next group focuses on more specific topics: bacterial infections,