

The Epilepsies – Seizures, Syndromes and Management

by C. P. Panayiotopoulos
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Tomis Panayiotopoulos is an internationally renowned epileptologist who has made a major contribution to defining the phenotypes of a number of well known epilepsy syndromes and some less well known syndromes. He is also an electroencephalographer who has made significant contributions to our understanding of the usefulness of the EEG in the clinical assessment of subjects with epilepsy.

Over the years, Dr Panayiotopoulos has been involved in the publication of a number of books on various aspects of clinical epileptology. This, however, is his most ambitious project to date. It is a single author text of over 500 pages. The first chapter presents an approach to the diagnosis of epileptic seizures and epileptic syndromes based upon the ILAE classifications and the new ILAE diagnostic scheme. The next three chapters cover the use of the EEG and brain imaging in the diagnosis and management of the epilepsies, and the principles of drug and other therapies to treat the epilepsies. The next nine chapters cover the whole range of epileptic seizures and epilepsies encountered, from the neonatal period throughout the remainder of life. The final chapter is a pharmacopoeia of antiepileptic drugs. A CD-rom accompanies the book and gives some illustrations of different types of epileptic seizures.

The publishers of the book are to be congratulated for producing a, visually, very attractive text. It is printed on high quality paper and the text appears in different colours in order to emphasise important points.

Dr Panayiotopoulos makes lavish use of tables and figures which are of a universally high quality. As might be expected, given his particular interests, the EEG illustrations are particularly noteworthy.

This is a book that oozes with the accumulated wisdom of a master epileptologist. Dr Panayiotopoulos knows his subject exceedingly well and the text is exceptionally well referenced. However, it is not this which makes the book so outstanding. When one reads it, one has the feeling that you are privy to a personal tutorial. This blend of meticulous attention to the published literature on the subject, combined with the personal (and sometimes individualistic) views of an experienced clinician is almost unique.

Dr Panayiotopoulos, like all who have a lifetime of experience behind them, has some views which are controversial, or at least are not universally held. The text is livened up by the fact that Dr Panayiotopoulos is never reticent in sharing these views.

This text will, I think, serve two main purposes. Firstly, it will serve as a comprehensive reference for the various electroclinical syndromes etc., which the up-to-date practitioner needs in order to be able to diagnose accurately. Secondly, because it is written in an easy style, it is likely to become a core text for those learning clinical epileptology. In other words, it is a book which will be both dipped into and a book which will be read from cover to cover. I would recommend it to epileptologists, neurologists (both adult and paediatric) and other physicians and paediatricians who have responsibility for the care of subjects with epilepsy. It is also recommended for epilepsy nurses and neurophysiologists.

In the relatively short time that the book has been available, it has become widely used and talked about, at least in the United Kingdom. It looks set to become one of the classic texts of epileptology and, I think, along with the syndrome which now bears his name, a lasting memorial to a great clinician, teacher and researcher.

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Other books received

European Handbook of Neurological Management

(Official EFNS Guidelines)
Edited by R. Hughes, M. Brainin, N.E. Gilhus
Blackwell Publishing, September 2006
www.blackwellpublishing.com