

BOOK REVIEW

Sleep Medicine in Clinical Practice

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This is a short textbook covering the wide field of sleep medicine written by renowned scientists and clinicians for clinicians rather than scientists. All the relevant aspects of sleep medicine are discussed in four well-structured sections: Basics of sleep medicine, The sleepy patient, The patient who cannot sleep and The patient with excessive movement in sleep.

A detailed description of the physiology of sleep is followed by a short introduction to the classification of sleep disorders, with particular emphasis on the International Classification of Sleep Disorders of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. This is followed by the commonly employed investigative methods for both outpatient and inpatient evaluation and treatment. Each of the subsequent chapters is devoted to a particular illness with a description of the pathophysiology, symptoms, diagnosis and differential diagnosis, followed, finally, by a good description of a case study with clearly arranged figures and tables.

The diagnostic and therapeutic procedures described reflect the American provenance of the authors. For example, split-night investigations (initiation of a nocturnal examination as a diagnostic procedure and changeover to ventilation treatment after 3–4 h) are uncommon in Europe, but virtually standard practice in the USA. However, against this background the definition of hypopnoea is not strictly oriented to the standard of the American Academy of

Sleep Medicine. The chapter on narcolepsy could be better structured, for example a separate consideration of rapid eye movement (REM)-associated and non-REM-associated symptoms is missing. The pathophysiology, clinical presentation and treatment of this disease could have been considerably simplified and rendered more readily understandable by making a clear distinction. Furthermore, it would appear that the patients with ventilatory insufficiency treated by the authors suffered mainly from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Unfortunately, the problems of ventilation associated with the bulbar variant of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis are only briefly mentioned. Patients with diseases of the thoracic wall, such as scoliosis and post-tuberculosis syndromes (a large group in Europe) receive little attention, but it is these patients in particular who benefit appreciably from noninvasive ventilation. The index is short and could have been more comprehensive.

Notwithstanding these few critical remarks, the book is very well written, easy to follow and adequately covers the wide-ranging interdisciplinary field of sleep medicine.

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