PARKINSON’S DISEASE: THE TREATMENT OPTIONS.
Edited by Peter LeWitt and Wolfgang Oertel.

The title of this book, Parkinson’s disease: the treatment options, is a misnomer, as the book covers a much wider field than that indicated. Seven of the 15 chapters describe other aspects of the disease, including the differential diagnosis, pathology, functional imaging, motor disorder, neuropsychiatry, epidemiology and etiology of Parkinson’s disease.

The initial 79 pages (Chapters 1–6) provide a reasonable outline of the disease but are, on the whole, prosaic and detract from the point of the book. In particular, the oversimplistic and turgid opening is hard going and the figures in Chapter 3 (on functional imaging) are too small. Nevertheless, in spite of the poor style of writing, a great deal of valuable and well referenced information is presented and there are several useful tables, the latter being a consistently strong feature of the whole book: the last chapter consists entirely of tables.

The remainder of the book (Chapters 7–14) is devoted to the treatment of Parkinson’s disease, including medical therapy, surgery and rehabilitation. In general, the section on medical therapy is informative, although the chapter named ‘Therapeutics of Parkinson’s disease’ omits to mention the use of propranolol, pergolide or apomorphine. These omissions are more than compensated for in later contributions, in which LeWitt provides a masterful essay on the pharmacology of the dopaminergic agonists that is a delight to read. There is perhaps too much overlap across the chapters about medical treatment, giving the impression that this is a collection of essays rather than a book. However, the knowledgeable reader will be fascinated by the subtle differences between each contributor’s overall treatment strategy, reflecting the present diversity of clinical practice.

Only one chapter concerns the surgical treatment of Parkinson’s disease, which is a pity given the recent renaissance and developments in this field. This chapter by Wichmann and Juncos includes an interesting account of basal ganglia circuitry and the present imperfect model of the pathophysiology of parkinsonism. However, their account of the effects of thalamic, pallidal and sub-thalamic nucleus surgery is sketchy.

The book also contains a useful review (by Pohl, Mrass
and Oertel) of the literature on rehabilitation in Parkinson’s disease.

*Parkinson’s disease: the treatment options* contains valuable information about the treatment of this disease. The text is well referenced and the tables provide a good resource. The book improves after a stolid beginning and contains one gem—LeWitt’s chapter on the pharmacology of dopaminergic agonists. Although the individual chapters lack adequate integration the book deserves a place in the library, where it would be a valuable reference source for a new research fellow or for neurologists or physicians wishing to enhance their interest in the subject.

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