
Book and Other Media Reviews

□ **NEUROTRAUMA AND
CRITICAL CARE OF THE BRAIN,
2ND EDITION. JALLO J AND
LOFTUS CM. NEW YORK,
THIEME MEDICAL PUBLISHERS,
2018, 416 PAGES, \$249.99.**

Neurotrauma and traumatic brain injury (TBI) have gotten a lot of press in the past few years. TBI in contact sports, especially football, has changed the way the games are played from little league to the NFL. TBI has become the signature injury from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan and is associated with posttraumatic stress disorder, a billion-dollar medical problem. Managing TBI, especially minor TBI or concussion, is difficult and controversial. Brain injuries and other neurotrauma require specialized knowledge and skills for the Emergency Medical Services providers and emergency physicians, as well as neurosurgeons.

The 87 contributors are from the United States, Italy, Australia, and Saudi Arabia; but unlike most textbooks, a significant number of contributors are residents and fellows and one medical student (Saudi Arabia). It is not that they cannot write a textbook, but their perspective might be a little stunted. The chapter on prehospital care for patients with traumatic brain injury, rather than having emergency physicians contribute, was written by two residents. In fact there are no emergency physicians contributing to this text. It seems to me that almost all neurotrauma is seen first by emergency physicians, and many critical care units are staffed by emergency physicians who are also intensivists.

The text is divided into six parts and 32 chapters. Each chapter has an “abstract” at the beginning summarizing the chapter. This is a good idea for scanning the material for a particular topic. Beginning with history, epidemiology, science, and management and moving to critical care and socioeconomics, the text is logically organized.

The chapter on the cost of TBI and the return on helmet investments was very interesting. I’ve never seen anything similar in other textbooks. The ethics of caring for severe TBI is discussed in depth, including the pediatric and the pregnant patient. I very much enjoyed the Guidelines Application for Traumatic Brain Injury chapter. A chapter such as this should be found in every medical textbook published. It outlines what practice guidelines are, how they are developed, what evidence-based medicine is, and many other questions about why and how we practice medicine in the 21st century. The Biomarker chapter gives an interesting perspective on how biomarkers could be used if we had such things. The radiographs reproduce well in the text, and there is a separate chapter on brain imaging. Many of the other illustrations do not enhance the textual material; for example, in the Mild Brain Injury chapter there is a color illustration of Tau antibody staining that has little clinical relevance in that the diagnosis is only postmortem. The material is supported by up-to-date references.

In summary, this is a well written, up-to-date neurotrauma text covering the topic of head injury and neurocritical care of the brain in depth. There is very little information on spinal injuries but I suspect that will be in an additional work. There is enough here to interest the emergency physician who is on the frontlines of neurotrauma and the emergency medicine-critical care specialist managing these patients in the intensive care unit. Fellows and residents with an interest in neurotrauma will find the material particularly useful in that the chapters are well organized and not overly verbose.

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