

Book Review

PRACTICAL APPROACH TO ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAPHY

by Mark H. Libenson, 333 pp., Saunders Elsevier, 2010, \$99

EEG is a skill that cannot be learned from a textbook. An introductory EEG text should serve as the starting point for the resident or fellow to get the most out of reading EEGs alongside an experienced electroencephalographer. *Practical Approach to Electroencephalography* fulfills the role of an introductory text quite well, providing an adequate background of the technical aspects of EEG, delineating the basic principles of EEG, and providing examples of common benign and pathologic EEG findings.

Practical Approach to Electroencephalography differs from other EEG texts of its level in that it takes the time to explain itself, resulting in a far more readable albeit less portable text than other condensed introductory texts. It is a handsome, well-organized hardcover book consisting of 13 chapters. After a brief introduction detailing the history of EEG, the book introduces EEG in an intuitive fashion. Many EEG texts commonly begin with an overview of the technical aspects of EEG, but this book engages the reader by immediately discussing the visual analysis of the EEG, offering a larger picture of EEG interpretation. Only then does it start showing the conventional line drawings of heads with lead placements and then eases into more technical discussion. Even this is done gently, with multiple restate-

ments of more complicated concepts, to make the reader feel that the ideas are being taught rather than merely being referenced. There is a wealth of high-quality figures throughout to complement the ideas in the text, and it is notable that the EEG figures have more arrows and labels than the average EEG text, leaving no ambiguity about what the figure caption is referencing.

One quibble about *Practical Approach to Electroencephalography* is that organization of the later chapters is slightly unusual. Whereas many EEG atlases begin with the normal EEG and progress to the abnormal EEG, this text seems to skip between the two, first discussing EEG artifacts, then a few chapters later, focusing on EEG in epilepsy, then switching to normal variants, then EEG patterns in stupor and coma. This is, however, a minor point in an otherwise excellent text.

The authors, in describing the process of learning to read EEG, liken this act to learning how to drive a car; both require active hands-on learning. In this case, *Practical Approach to Electroencephalography* serves well as a Global Positioning System device, offering guidance to the neurology resident or fellow who wishes to navigate the foreign lands of EEG.

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Disclosure: Dr. Wong serves on the Neurology® Resident & Fellow Section editorial team.

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