

# Media and Book Reviews

## NEUROMUSCULAR DISEASE: A CASE-BASED APPROACH

*edited by John H.J. Wokke, Pieter A. van Doorn, Jessica E. Hoogendijk, and Marianne de Visser, 178 pp., Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 2013, \$79.99*

Neuromuscular medicine is a diverse field with an emphasis on the genetic and molecular basis of disease. It poses challenges for the neurologist in making diagnoses and formulating treatments. Many neurology residents get intimidated by the complexity of neuromuscular disease presentations and the broad differential diagnosis of many cases. This book is successful at converting such a complex branch of neurology into a digestible format.

The most prominent feature of this book is its ability to succinctly deliver the main concepts on different neuromuscular disorders through case histories in an average of 2 pages per disease. All cases follow the same order of clinical reasoning: clinical history and examination, followed by basic laboratory studies and ancillary diagnostics, including EMG and muscle or nerve biopsy. All the available data are then assembled together and analyzed to form a hypothesis about the diagnosis. The section on pathophysiology is brief, yet sufficient to highlight the main theories. As one reads through the cases, one develops a pattern of critical thinking on how to approach patients with neuromuscular complaints.

The authors have made a great effort to appeal to a diverse audience by keeping this a concise, easy-to-digest, comprehensive text on neuromuscular medicine. The book consists of 59 cases presented in 171 pages. Use of simple language facilitates reading

for a prolonged time. The authors were selective in their references and acquired data from top-quality journals.

There is a wide variety of illustrations: photographs demonstrating important signs, neuroimaging, pathologic sections, and videos. The tables are a great feature for comparison of closely related entities. However, some of them are lengthy and change the concept of this book from “concise, easy-to-digest, and comprehensive” into “concise, yet needing a good use of memory!” On the other hand, one could argue this is inevitable given the complexity of the topics and the need for brevity.

The book could have been strengthened by a chapter highlighting the basics of EMG, particularly focusing on the clinical translation of certain EMG findings. Moreover, elaboration on the details of treatment regimens including medication doses would supplement the practical value of the book.

All in all, this book will be of great value to neurology residents who want an easy read on this complicated subject. Reading such a book will be a sufficient replacement for the 4 to 5 chapters that major textbooks usually devote to neuromuscular diseases and will provide an easier means of acquiring the main concepts. The book could also be an excellent brief introduction for the neuromuscular medicine fellow before diving into the details of larger textbooks.

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*Disclosure: The author reports no disclosures relevant to the manuscript. Go to [Neurology.org](http://Neurology.org) for full disclosures.*

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