## BOOK REVIEW

Bullets and Brains, by Andrew Nathan Wilner, MD
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"Bullets and Brains" is a collection of essays originally published on Medscape.com. The author is a board certified internist and neurologist, who is also a fellowship-trained epileptologist. He currently is a hospital neurologist who practices at the Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London, CT. In addition to being a busy clinician, Dr. Wilner is a prolific writer who has authored two books on epilepsy, his professional specialty, as well as weekly blogs on Medscape.com, a division of WebMD.

These essays are excellent, short vignettes on a whole range of interesting topics, the majority of which approach the level of a scientific article with numerous, well-selected references. They include many of the current topics of the day and are well-researched with specific attention given to the science of the subject being discussed. Besides being superbly educational, I found them, plain and simply, fun to read. As a practicing surgeon, I never have the time to keep up to date on such topics as the latest treatment for epilepsy — which is the largest, and best written and researched section of the book (not surprisingly given the author's specialty) — the most current and advanced therapy for multiple sclerosis, memory and Alzheimer's disease, and Blue Person Syndrome.

There was an analysis of chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI) as a cause for multiple sclerosis (MS), which was especially interesting. The "theory" is that stenosis and anomalies of the internal jugular vein and azygous vein cause venous congestion in the brain with resultant pericapillary iron deposition, an autoimmune response and then multiple sclerosis. The treatment is endovascular dilatation, stenting or possibly venoplasty of the affected veins. Although millions have been spent on this therapy, there are thus far no valid scientific studies to confirm the theory. But the thought that a vascular surgeon or an interventional radiologist could some how "cure" MS was tantalizingly intriguing, although obviously bogus.

I found other interesting essays to be on topics such as Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords' bullet injury and its consequences, concussions in boxers, the latest on treatment and pathophysiology on vampire bat bites and rabies, anti-venom therapy for scorpion stings, and nanotechnology in neurologic diseases.

The essays are particularly useful and educational for physicians involved in clinical care, as the essays often discuss and analyze what is circulating in the mainstream media about the latest research on drugs, therapy and procedures. The public is becoming increasingly sophisticated about their or their loved one's medical diagnoses and often ask medical questions about the most current therapy and whether it's legitimate or just a fad. There is practical information in this book for physicians that is not available elsewhere that can assist in answering those questions.

The publication of this book raises an interesting conundrum: why not just go on line and read the essays on the blog? Why publish them? There is still something about holding a book in one's hands that is most satisfying, convenient and relaxing. Perhaps a book in the hand is worth two blogs in the computer. Read "Brains and Bullets" and you will know for sure.

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