

# Book and Media Review

## Bullets and Brains

Andrew Nathan Wilner

532 pp, \$17.97, ISBN 978-1-49039-692-7, North Charleston, South Carolina, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.

It was highly enjoyable to read *Bullets and Brains*, which is a collection of 103 essays originally published by Andrew Nathan Wilner on Medscape.com, a division of WebMD geared toward health care professionals. These essays were released between 2009 and 2013 (with a short update being provided for many of the older essays in this edition), primarily as part of the author's recurring columns "Wilner on Neurology" and "Epilepsy Notes." The whole book covers a broad range of clinical and scientific neurological topics, featuring sections on traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer disease, stroke, recent prevention and treatment guidelines, and physician practice issues, as well as assorted chapters on delirium, the history of neurology, and, as an example of the partially uncommon content that some of the essays are based on, the influence of microgravity on intracranial pressure. However, the vast majority of the essays (ie, chapters) are dedicated to epilepsy, Dr Wilner's main area of interest; he completed an epilepsy fellowship at the Montreal Neurological Institute in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and is the former author of 2 books on epilepsy.

In many of the chapters, Dr Wilner gives us a concise overview of a current medical problem by reviewing the latest literature or new trials (eg, stenting or carotid endarterectomy as treatment options for patients with carotid artery disease after results of the Carotid Revascularization Endarterectomy vs Stenting Trial had been published, or a summary of [the lack of] evidence for the controversial "venous insufficiency" theory of multiple sclerosis). At the end of each chapter, pertinent references are indicated. Moreover, the reader will find many personal insights and comments from the author on a variety of medical subjects, such as how to react as a physician during an in-flight medical emergency, current advances in nanotechnology for new developments of drug delivery, the challenge of implementing electronic medical records in clinical practice, how to get an appointment with a dermatologist in a timely manner, new trends in neuroenhancement, and the proper conduct of health care professionals with regard to social media, to name just a few.

Notably, Dr Wilner is the medical director of Lingdok Timog, a volunteer medical mission group that travels annually to rural areas of the Philippines. In 2 chapters, he intriguingly describes his experience as a neurologist during 2 missions in 2011 and 2012, and, in

addition to reflecting on the social implications and cultural impact of his journey, discusses a selection of clinically interesting cases that he encountered.

The author's elegant and sophisticated writing style, which is easily apprehensible even though dealing with mostly complicated medical issues, makes this book, which is brimming with lots of witty remarks, not only quite informative but also very exhilarating and enjoyable. Because of Dr Wilner's special expertise in epilepsy, most of the chapters are concerned with this disorder; however, one may regret the paucity of other specific neurological topics. For instance, you will find only 1 essay on movement disorders and 1 prevention and treatment guideline on Parkinson disease, and I would have loved to read more about the author's personal experience in this field. The same applies for peripheral neuropathy. Furthermore, few illustrations are provided. Despite their initial publication dates (between 2009 and 2013), all of the essays are definitely still worth reading. Except for the latest clinical recommendations from the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center ("Progressive Return to Activity Following Acute Concussion/Mild Traumatic Brain Injury") that were published in 2014, the Prevention and Treatment Guidelines section is remarkably still up to date.

Overall, it has been a great pleasure to read *Bullets and Brains*. Predominantly intended for a medical audience, I can wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone who is interested in neurology. The slightly unusual title of the book is also the title of the first chapter of the first section, which is about traumatic brain injury. It was inspired by the tragic incident that happened to Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, who became a victim of an assassination attempt in 2011 and survived a gunshot wound to the head (unfortunately, she had to resign from Congress owing to persistent neurologic deficits).

Prose ★★★★★  
Illustrations ★★  
Science ★★★★★  
Usefulness ★★★★★

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