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VITAMIN INTAKE AND HEALTH: A SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

By Suzanne K. Gaby, Adrienne Bendich, Vishwa Singh, and Lawrence J. Machlin
Marcel Dekker

This tightly written book reviews literature on the effectiveness and side effects of vitamins and provitamins through 1989. The text is focused and contains both positive and negative vignettes of major studies. Facts are presented plainly and without bias. Much effort has gone into presenting this information in a readable fashion. A uniform format makes it easy to find specific subsections. The chapter on vitamin C is particularly well written and includes discussion of controversial areas.

This excellent book is helpful in the use of vitamins and valuable as a reference on study outcomes and side effects. I recommend it to anyone wishing to extend his or her knowledge about vitamins beyond what is published in the popular press.

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EPILEPSY: CURRENT APPROACHES TO DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Edited by Dennis B. Smith, MD
Raven Press

Physicians who are not epileptologists are the target of this volume. The chapters are well-written overviews, including updates in evaluation and treatment. General principles are elaborated at length, while specific details are presented occasionally to supplement explanations. The book is organized progressively, so that each chapter builds from previous ones.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section presents diagnostic methods—classification of seizure and epilepsy, routine electroencephalogram, prolonged video-electroencephalogram monitoring, and neuroimaging. The second section describes the management of epilepsy in patients from pediatrics to geriatrics, with discussion of both pharmacological and surgical treatment. One chapter is devoted to common therapeutic issues such as treatment of a single seizure, seizure prophylaxis of head injury, management of pregnant epileptic patients, and management of status epilepticus.

The final section sets this volume apart from many other epilepsy texts by discussing social, emotional, and psychiatric problems and complications associated with epilepsy, including medicolegal issues related to violence resulting from a seizure or epileptic condition. The last chapter updates the neurobiologic mechanisms thought to play roles in epilepsy and reviews the experimental models of epilepsy used for their study.

This volume will be useful to neurology residents, epilepsy fellows, and general neurologists looking for a current and concise review. It would also be useful to family practitioners, internists, emergency physicians, and psychiatrists who are often the first to see the patient with a new paroxysmal event. However, the book's price (\$90) seems inflated in view of the general scope of the text.

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EPILEPSY AND SUDDEN DEATH

Lathers CH, Schraeder PL
Marcel Dekker

Although sudden death accounts for 12% to 15% of deaths in epileptic persons (a twofold increase over the general population), little has been written about this subject. This book presents the latest epidemiologic, clinical, and experimental data.

The preface provides an excellent overview. Epidemiologic data on sudden death in the general population and in epileptic patients are presented, followed by pathological findings at autopsy. Approximately half the chapters are devoted to experimental data on autonomic changes, the role of neurotransmitters and neuromodulators, and animal models of sudden death. Chapters on the roles of cocaine, alcohol, psychoactive drugs, and stress are well written. The significance of paroxysmal autonomic dysfunction and cardiac arrhythmias—including the "lock-step" phenomenon (cardiac sympathetic or parasympathetic discharges synchronized with epileptiform discharges)—is described very well; however, the conclusions regarding the significance of electroencephalographic changes prior to sudden death are flawed.

This book brings us closer to understanding sudden death among epileptic patients and is a useful reference for the clinician and the basic scientist.

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GERIATRIC NUTRITION: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

Edited by John E. Morley, MB, BCH; Zvi Glick, PhD;
Lawrence Z. Rubenstein, MD
Raven Press

This book presents a wide-ranging and useful compilation of information on nutrition in aging. The editors are to be commended for including a number of important subjects not commonly covered, such as nutritional misinformation, nutrition in the prevention of age-associated diseases, the anorexia of aging, and cardiac cachexia. A chapter on vitamin disorders discusses function, assessment, risk factors, deficiencies, and toxicity for each vitamin.

Several chapters include redundant sections, such as multiple discussions of the assessment of nutrition and the effect of nutrition on lymphocyte function. A chapter on exercise and muscle strength seems far removed from the main theme of the book, and another on Menhaden oil administration and memory enhancement in mice would be more appropriate as a journal article than as a chapter in a reference text. Other chapters need additional detail: discussion of therapeutic modalities for treating malnutrition could devote more attention to enteral and parenteral therapy, and tube feeding merits a chapter of its own.

These criticisms notwithstanding, the book is a helpful addition to geriatric reference collections and will find use by geriatricians and others caring for elderly patients.

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