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BOOK REVIEW

Balance Function Assessment and Management. Second Edition. by Gary P. Jacobson & Neil T. Shepard (Eds.). Plural Publishing, San Diego: 34 chapters, 887 pp

With their clinical and research activities spanning the last few decades, Gary P. Jacobson (Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences, Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center for Otolaryngology and Communication Sciences, Nashville, Tennessee) and Neil T. Shepard (Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota) have made a well recognized contribution to the field of balance disorder diagnostics and management, confirmed by their 114 and 72 international publications, respectively, listed in the Scopus® database (Elsevier B.V.) with an h-index of 23 and 22, respectively (as at July 18, 2015).

The two editors have assembled a comprehensive volume giving an account of the current status of anatomo-physiological knowledge of disorders of the vestibular system and balance, and their assessment, interpretation and management. The more than 40 contributors are acknowledged authorities in their respective areas of otology, neurology, and vestibular medicine, active at academic and other institutions in three continents (North America, Europe, and Australia). The following new topics have been included in this second edition: 1) the development of the vestibular system; 2) central compensation following peripheral vestibular system impairment; 3) the video head impulse test (vHIT); 4) the biomechanics and physiology of balance; 5) electrocochleography (ECochG); 6) paediatric vestibular system and balance assessment; and 7) the effects of age on the vestibular and balance systems.

Balance Function Assessment and Management, Second Edition first addresses the anatomy and physiology of the vestibular system, providing the basic concepts and information essential to our understanding of how to investigate the vestibular system and assess balance. The chapters dedicated to balance function assessment and diagnostics provide a fairly detailed background and discuss assessment techniques, data interpretation, and the usefulness of ocular motility, positional/positioning, caloric, and rotational tests, computerized dynamic posturography, vestibular evoked potentials, and ECochG. The chapters on treatment focus mainly on the non-medical and medical management of peripheral vertigo, surgery for vertigo, and vestibular rehabilitation. Chapters concerning the role of rehabilitation also provide some interesting considerations on the quite common occurrence of dizziness in the elderly, which can interfere with their mobility, activities, and quality of life. The last chapter contains illustrative cases showing the value of correlating data drawn from vestibular/balance function tests, including electro-videonystagmography, rotational tests, and computerized dynamic posturography. The book comes with a DVD of supplementary video material that adds to the information provided in chapters 1 (Practical anatomy and physiology of the vestibular system), 7 (Bedside assessment of the vestibular system), 9 (Background and technique of ocular motility testing), 10 (Interpretation and usefulness of ocular motility testing), 16 (The video head impulse test (vHIT)), and 33 (Multifactorial assessment of fall risk in elderly).

In brief, this publication is well planned and illustrated, is easily readable, with an abundance of up-to-date references, and a precise index. It covers all aspects of the assessment, interpretation, and management of balance disorders in adequate detail. Balance Function Assessment and Management, Second Edition is appropriate for use both as a study tool and for consultation by all otolaryngology and audiology residents, as well as a welcome, thorough overview for staff members (otolaryngologists, audiologists, but also neurologists and, probably more marginally, physiatrists) more familiar with the practical aspects of the diagnosis and/or treatment of balance disorders.

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