

BOOK REVIEW

An invaluable and long-overdue clinical companion to the management of common neurological disorders: a review of the seventh edition of *Neurology for the Non-Neurologist* (ISBN: 978-1-975215-66-8)

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Abstract: The seventh edition of the book *Neurology for the Non-Neurologist* has been 16 years due to serve as an updated companion for healthcare professionals not specialised on neurology, to be able to properly deal with neurologic cases as the first point of contact, when such an occasion arises. The book is divided into three sections. Section 1 discusses the most important tools that help clinicians approach the diagnosis of neurologic disorders. Section 2 analyses the clinical approach of patients depending on their neurologically relevant chief complaint. Finally, section 3 examines the diagnosis and treatment of the most important / frequent neurologic disorders. The book has been edited by two distinguished members of the neurological community, Drs Lewis and Berkowitz, with an established record of practicing and teaching neurology at the highest standards. The book has been designed in a way to facilitate engagement and for the readership to be effectively guided through the internal structure of the book and spot the key points per chapter. On the other hand, future editions of this book may contain a few more, short chapters on functional neuroanatomy, basic principles of neuropsychotherapeutics or preventive medicine, and further enrich its content with visual aids that support the learning process. This book review concludes with two suggestions: (i) updating the book in shorter intervals and (ii) focusing intellectually on as-

sisting medical doctors improve their efficiency when deciding on whether neurologically relevant symptoms refer to an underlying, primary neurologic problem or not.

Keywords: neurologic disorders; neurologic symptoms; neurology; non-neurologist; USA

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Lewis S. L., Berkowitz A. L. (editors): *Neurology for the Non-Neurologist*. Seventh Edition. Philadelphia, PA: *Wolters Kluwer* (2026). ISBN: 978-1-975215-66-8 | xii+322, softcover, 50.85 USD

Background

There are two main categories of medical books: massive books of thousands of pages, aiming at covering the whole extent of a field in full depth, acting as reference textbooks (Jankovic *et al.*, 2022), and smaller, more focused ones, serving a very particular purpose. *Neurology for the Non-Neurologist* (Lewis and Berkowitz, 2026) belongs to the second category and its up-to-date, seventh edition (published in 2026) encompasses an almost 45-year-long tradition on doing this. Having a chronological distance of 16 years from the previous

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Table 1. Overview of the internal structure (titles of sections and chapters, as well as key contents) of the seventh edition of *Neurology for the Non-Neurologist*.

Section	Chapters	Key contents
1: Introduction to neurologic diagnosis	1: Approach to neurologic diagnosis; 2: The neurologic history; 3: The neurologic examination; 4: Neurodiagnostic testing	the neurologic diagnostic method, localisation of the neurologic disease, mechanisms of neurologic disease; present illness and past medical history, medications, family and social history; mental status, cranial nerves, motor system, sensory system, cerebellar function, reflexes, stance, and gait; neuroimaging, cerebrospinal fluid analysis, electroencephalography, nerve conduction studies / electromyography
2: Approach to neurologic symptoms	5: Approach to the patient with cognitive symptoms; 6: Approach to the patient with a disorder of consciousness; 7: Approach to the patient with transient neurologic symptoms; 8: Approach to the patient with headache; 9: Approach to the patient with dizziness; 10: Approach to the patient with sensory symptoms; 11: Approach to the patient with weakness; 12: Approach to the patient with visual symptoms; 13: Approach to the patient with abnormal movements; 14: Approach to the patient with abnormal gait	common clinical presentations, neuroanatomy and pathophysiology, clinical approach (history / examination), diagnostic evaluation; each chapter may contain a small section that is specific to the topic discussed
3: Diagnosis and treatment of neurologic disorders	15: Primary headache disorders; 16: Cerebrovascular disease; 17: Seizures and epilepsy; 18: Dementia; 19: Movement disorders; 20: Multiple sclerosis and other demyelinating diseases of the central nervous system; 21: Neurologic infections; 22: Vestibular disorders; 23: Spinal cord and nerve root disorders; 24: Peripheral nerve disorders; 25: Neuromuscular junction and muscle disorders; 26: Cancer and the nervous system; 27: Neurologic complications of systemic disease; 28: Neurology of pregnancy; 29: Sleep disorders; 30: Head trauma	each chapter is divided into distinct clinical entities and sub-entities, where applicable, and the clinical presentation, diagnostic evaluation, treatment and prognosis of each entity / sub-entity is discussed

edition, the current version of the book tries to catch up with the significant advancements in the field of neurology that took place during the last two decades.

Summary

The book is divided into three sections. Section 1 provides an overview of the most important tools that help clinicians approach the diagnosis of neurologic disorders through four chapters (24 pages): an introductory one and three subsequent chapters about taking a neurologic history, performing a neurologic examination, and using imaging or electrodiagnostic techniques to complete the usual investigation. Section 2 (comprising 10 chapters, just below 100 pages in length) analyses the clinical approach of patients depending on their (neurologically relevant) chief complaint, being either a change in their normal cognitive functions or in the level / content of their consciousness, the presence of dizziness, sensory, motor, or visual symptoms, or gait abnormalities. Finally, section 3, which is the longest part of the book (16 chapters; 197 pages) discusses the diagnosis and treatment of the most important and common neurologic disorders such as stroke, seizures, headache, neurodegenerative, demyelinating or infectious conditions, disorders of the peripheral nervous system, disorders affecting the neuromuscular junction, neuro-oncology, and others (Table 1).

Critical analysis

The editors of this book, as well as the rest of the 23 total contributors, have established, long-lasting careers in academic and clinical neurology across the US.

Of the editors, Dr Steven L. Lewis is a fellow of the American Academy of Neurology (FAAN), serving as the physician-in-chief of the Lehigh Valley Fleming Neuroscience Institute in Pennsylvania and as an adjunct professor of neurology at Thomas Jefferson University. He has been practicing and teaching neurology for more than four decades. He is the current president (and former secretary general) of the World Federation of Neurology (WFN), the chair of the WFN Education Committee, the editor of *World Neurology*, and the associate editor for global neurology for the *Journal of the Neurological Sciences*. He is also the editor-in-chief of *MedLink Neurology*, the immediate past director and past chair of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, a past chair of the Neurology Residency Review Committee of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, and the past editor-in-chief of *Continuum: Lifelong Learning in Neurology*. Dr Lewis was awarded the A. B. Baker Award for Lifetime Achievement in Neurologic Education from the American Academy of Neurology in 2019, and four years later, he also received the American Neurological Association Award for Excellence in Education.

The other editor of the book is Professor Aaron L. Berkowitz FAAN, who serves as a professor of neurology at the University of California, San Francisco. He graduated from the Medical School of Johns Hopkins University and did his PhD and neurology residency at Harvard University. He became an associate professor at the same university, where he developed and taught the preclinical neuroanatomy course for medical students. Later on, as a health and policy advisor to Partners in Health, he worked with local partners in Haiti in order to develop the country's first neurology training program, while as a senior specialist consultant to Doctors Without Borders, he provides teleconsultation to front-line providers in resource-limited settings.

Both academic physicians have authored various medical books on neurological topics, and their decision to update a classical reading for the non-specialists is followed by a few insightful editorial choices. For example, every chapter in this book begins with a table titled "chapter outline" and ends with another table titled "editors' key points". This way readers can quickly have an overview of the chapter as well as its take-home message. Moreover, the book overall contains a good number of diagrams, tables, and images from brain or spinal cord imaging, all of which facilitate the understanding of key clinical concepts. Finally, appropriate colour coding in headings / subheading, tables, and figures is employed in order to allow the readers to distinguish between different parts of each chapter in a manner that enhances engagement (Ortega *et al.*, 2017).

Suggestions for further improvement in subsequent editions of the book include: (i) the addition of two short, separate chapters in the first section of the book, of which one to be dedicated to functional neuroanatomy and one to provide the general principles of neuropsychopharmacology and -therapeutics, (ii) raising the number of diagrams concerning the pipeline of clinical decision-making steps when managing patients with neurologically relevant symptoms or patients with an established neurologic diagnosis, so as to facilitate the learning process of non-specialists as to how to deal with (potentially) neurologic patients (Slough *et al.*, 2010), and (iii) the addition of two brief chapters in a new, fourth book section, discussing about (primary and secondary) preventive neurology as well as palliative care, rehabilitation, and non-pharmacological therapies. Finally, the significant delay of 16 years before publishing a new edition of this book is problematic given the rapid evolution of neurology (Hampel *et al.*, 2023). A suggestion would be to update the book in shorter intervals (perhaps every 5–7 years).

Readership

The book aims at providing a concise reading for healthcare professionals not specialised on that topic,

to be able to properly deal with neurologic cases as the first point of contact, when such an occasion arises. This is truly not infrequent in clinical practice, for example in a primary healthcare setting or in the emergency department, where general practitioners or internists take the initial decisions on the management of patients with an acute onset of weakness or dizziness or headache or altered mental status (Volnukhin *et al.*, 2025). Nevertheless, I believe that the book is also a good fit for medical students who undergo their neurology rotation during their training.

Conclusion

Neurology for the Non-Neurologist constitutes a valuable piece of work that enables healthcare professionals not specialised in neurology (but encountering neurologic patients in their working routine) to acquire knowledge on the vital steps surrounding their clinical management and main points of medical concern. In subsequent editions, the book could strategically focus on sensitising the discriminatory skills of medical doctors, when confronting with neurologically relevant symptoms, to decide whether they are more likely or unlikely to reflect an actual neurological problem.

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Conflicts of interest statement

None to declare.

Data availability statement

Not applicable.

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