

## Book review

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**Evaluation and Management of Gait Disorders**, edited by Barney S. Spivack, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1995. pp. 349, £108.00 (hardback).

'Walking gives me freedom and independence,' a patient once said to me, 'and independence, means privacy.' Gait abnormalities, a feature of many neurological diseases, are a major cause of physical disability, with consequent emotional problems. The symptoms and pathology of gait and posture disorders and the response to treatment are still poorly understood by clinicians. This book, by employing a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach, helps to redress this shortcoming by providing the essential basic physical and medical information together with practical clinical aspects of gait analysis.

There are four chapters in the book: the first is informative, providing the methodological basis of clinical gait analysis through review of the physiological anatomy of the muscles and joints involved in posture and gait. The biomechanical factors affecting the normal gait mechanism are described followed by the different protocols and tools available, and discussing the various parameters of analysis with plenty of simple illustrations and diagrams. I enjoyed this section although I would suggest the reader starts with the chapter on 'Neural Control of Locomotion' first, and then go to the 'Clinical Gait Analysis' chapter. The second section, addresses neurological diseases that may cause gait disorders. There are then separate chapters focusing on disorders of the vestibular, cerebellar and

extra pyramidal diseases. I found it very educating indeed!

The different patterns of gait abnormality in elderly healthy individuals is discussed in the third section of this book along with the commonest pathological conditions affecting the foot and ankle, including some excellent illustrations. Attention is drawn to the adverse effect of the commonly prescribed drugs on gait and mobility, for example those used for hypertension, constipation and sleep disorders. I wondered if this section would be better reorganised into a 'healthy elderly gait patterns' section, which should have placed before the 'gait analysis' section, and leaving 'common pathological conditions affecting gait' to join the second section.

The fourth and last section discusses the consequences of immobilisation on the body, rehabilitation protocols and the impact of physical activity and fitness on functional capacity. I thought this section over long, but it contains a gem of a chapter discussing causes, assessment and intervention in elderly patients suffering from falls, with some helpful tables.

Although this book appears somewhat disorganised, it is useful as an introduction for more specialised reading, and will contain something to interest physicians and surgeons at trainee and specialist level in neurology, orthopedics, psychiatry, care of the elderly and even otolaryngology. General practitioners, occupational and physiotherapists, and, of course, researchers will find it of value. I recommend it for any one interested in balance and gait problems.

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