



Multiple Sclerosis

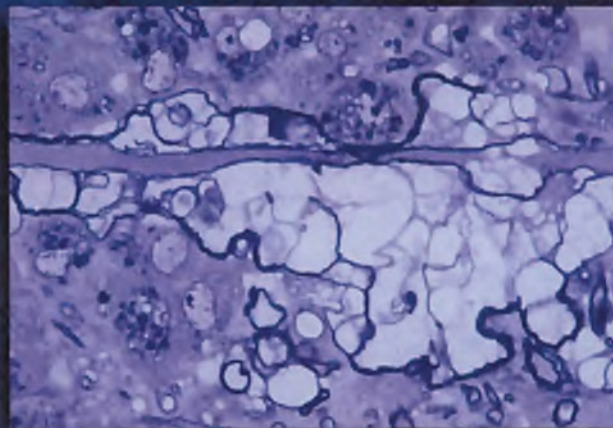
A COMPREHENSIVE TEXT

Edited by

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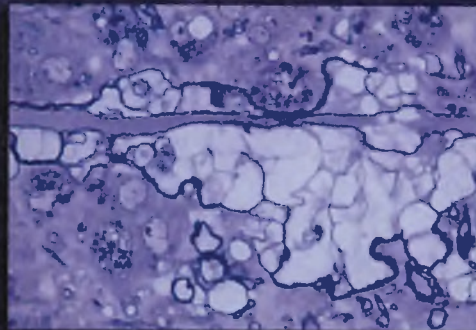
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Multiple Sclerosis: A Comprehensive Text



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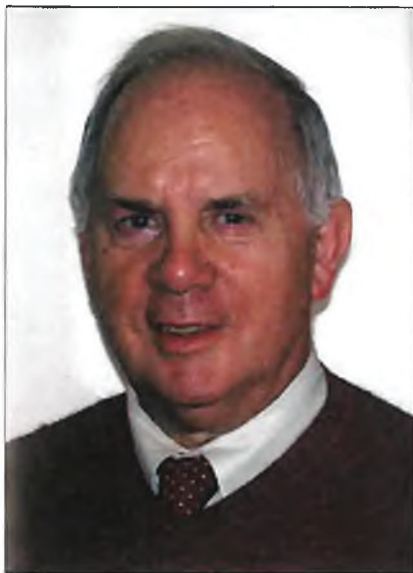
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Preface

Why another book on multiple sclerosis? To us, the reason was obvious – the terrain of multiple sclerosis (MS) is vast and ever-changing. So much is happening that concepts forged just 2 years ago are already passé. Whether viewed from the platform of the health professional responsible for the day-to-day care of the patient or the scientist working to unravel what makes this a unique disease, MS has over the last decade evolved into a condition necessitating multidisciplinary approaches to both its management and understanding. One needs only to peruse the profiles of the personnel associated with an MS care center (particularly one located in an academic setting) to appreciate the enormous array of skills and treatments now available to the patient. For the scientific investigator, the rapidity of developments in recent years has been quite intimidating as genetics, immunology and molecular biology have assumed center stage, a fact reflected daily in our language, tools and techniques. In short, MS is a moving target and, as a consequence, we need to keep adjusting our sights. This book is the latest adjustment.

Why a 'comprehensive' textbook? In the past, authors of texts on MS have shied away from broad-fronted coverage, with the preface of one renowned 1985 tome announcing 'it is no longer possible even to attempt a comprehensive work on mul-

iple sclerosis'. If that were the case 20-plus years ago when the number of treatments for the MS patient was virtually zero and the diagnostic tools and research options were limited (to say the least), imagine the scope of the endeavor today! We have for certain come a long way since the 1980s – just look how much is out there now for the patient! With more than half-a-dozen approved and effective drugs specifically designed for MS, and dozens in advanced stages of clinical trials and/or awaiting approval, there is a wealth of new information to report. Thus, because the horizon is brighter than ever before for those affected with or involved in the condition, we think the time is ripe for a fresh look at the status of MS as a clinical problem, for the latest coverage on expanding prospects for the patient, and for a state-of-the-art re-evaluation of changes occurring within the nervous system. Since any approach to MS, scientific or care-related, is almost guaranteed to embrace the combined skills of several disciplines, for an individual to embark single-handed upon the preparation of a text on the subject might understandably be deemed over-ambitious. Therefore, fully cognizant of the challenge and somewhat intimidated by recently published excellent works on the subject, the present Anglo-American-German editorial alliance was assembled, each editor having one foot firmly planted in MS and the other in a



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