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Raymond Levy, Robert Howard

Developments in Dementia and Functional Disorders in Elderly

Wrightson, 1995
 195 pp.; £ 35.00
 ISBN 1-871816-27-0

Treatment of dementia is one of the most frustrating fields. The book of Levy and Howard, which presents the contributions of a 1994 meeting in London, tries to update and evaluate the trends of drug development in the treatment of dementia. Two additional chapters consider aspects of molecular biology of Alzheimer's disease (Lewy body disease and vascular dementia) and the present trend of the management of depression. A particularly interesting part is the survey about the Lewy body dementia and its clinical criteria.

Remarkable is the report of Raymond Levy about the results of the Working Group of the International Psychiatric Association, in collaboration with the WHO, about age-associated cognitive decline. This article discusses to which degree age, self-reported cognitive decline, level of education, gender, race, and cultural background must be considered as strong or weak criteria in the evaluation of a cognitive disturbance and their importance for the evaluation of a beginning dementia.

In a series of drug studies the state of art is presented for the cholinesterase inhibitor Tacrine[®] (improvement of memory after 18-30 weeks of treatment; 40% of patients develop elevated transaminase levels or cholinergic side effects and have to be withdrawn from the treatment) and for Velacrine[®] (an aminoacridine derivative; responder rate 10-30%). A nimodipine[®] report demonstrates beneficial effects in different scales used for testing of the progress of dementia. Early clinical effects (phases I and IIa) are reported for the noradrenergic and vasopressinergic compound S 12024 - 1-methyl-8-(2 morpholinylmethoxy)-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinoline methane sulfonate. This compound modifies (dose 100-200 mg/day during 1-2 months) cognitive decline and improves attention and cerebral blood flow.

Two papers discuss trends in the improvement of daily living scales in dementia and clinical global assessment.

A fascinating article of Martin Knapp and coworkers deals with the importance of health economics as a complement in the therapy of dementia. An economic evaluation of care and treatment of demented patients provides more and better information for health policy and practical decisions. Cost-effectiveness insights are helpful contributions in the process of decision making.

This monograph is a helpful and valuable tool for those who are confronted with the day-to-day work of treatment of demented patients. It represents, however, also a wealth of information for health authorities and drug companies working in the field of psychogeriatrics. An excellent index helps to find quickly a subject of particular interest.

W. Meier-Ruge, Basel

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R.M. Klatz

Advances in Anti-Aging Medicine, vol. 1

Liebert, Larchmont 1996
 395 pp.
 ISBN 0-913113-71-9

The proceedings of the 1994 Conference on Anti-Aging Medicine, held in Las Vegas, Nevada, is a fascinating report for everyone who is interested in heuristic ideas and trends in geriatric diagnostic and treatment. Except for the fact that some reports have a science fiction character, it is promising that an extension in the expectancy of a healthy and productive life beyond age 65 can be expected for the next 50 years, by better prevention and treatment of diseases in the elderly.

Reading the introduction on 'The War on Aging Has Begun', by R.M. Klatz, the president of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (Chicago, Ill., USA) a series of ideas arise in the reader's mind regarding the socio-economic consequences of pro-

longing the mean life expectancy to more than 100 years. This book is a 'must' for everyone interested in improving or preserving healthy life in old age.

The main topics of the book are presented in four sections: 'Prevention of Age-Related Diseases', 'Prospects for Life Extension', 'Innovative Clinical Approaches to Anti-Aging Therapies' and 'The Impact of Clinical Anti-Aging Therapeutics'.

A few aspects of this interesting book may be outlined: J.S. Golden from New York analyses the financial consequences of longer life expectancy. Most retirees fund their retirement years from personal savings, social security benefits and employment pension plans, which are suffering from the increasing inflation. In this situation life insurance seems to be the single guarantee for a quality of life independent of inflation and longevity. The insurance industry routinely adapts design, price annuities and mortality rates to the needs of the retirees of the next century.

Early detection of cancer with high specificity seems to be possible by a serum anti-malignant antibody test. Anti-malignin is an IgM auto-antibody against malignin occurring in every cancer cell regardless of its cell type (S. Bogoch and E.S. Bogoch, Boston, Mass.).

Sports training for elderly persons is reviewed, demonstrating that the best longevity tonic is physical

exercise (R. Goldman, Chicago). Some futuristic technologies are described (e.g. a brain resuscitation technique for head trauma, acute stroke and cardiac arrest limiting hypoxic brain lesions), expanding the therapeutic window (R.M. Klatz, Chicago).

A commercial instrument is described for testing biological age in humans (R. Hochschild, Corona del Mar, Calif.).

Reviews on the effects of dihydroepiandrosterone on immune response, corticosteroid action and CNS activity (W. Regelson and M.Y. Kalimi, Richmond, Va.) and on gene therapy (D. Kleinsek, Geri Gene Med. Corp., Elkhart, Wis.) are given.

The book ends with a listing of the different organizations involved in problems with aging, longevity research, life extension and preventive medicine. A list of research organizations and societies involved in aging research is given. An extended index aids in finding a matter of particular interest quickly.

Only few monographs of this kind are presently available. This book may generate new concepts in scientists and laboratories engaged in research and development. If at least a single idea of this book is realized in the next 10 years, its primary aim, to extend the period of healthy life in old age, will have been attained.

W. Meier-Ruge, Basel