

INTRODUCTION TO NEUROGENIC COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

Edition 6

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Robert H. Brookshire

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Edition **6**

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with 174 illustrations

 **Mosby**

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Introduction to Neurogenic Communication Disorders

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For Lisa

The autumn wind touches the mountain _____

The spring leaf falls to earth



Foreword

The remarkable capacity of humans to communicate emerged in a gradual, evolutionary way. Today it explodes on the scene during the early years of life. As normal communicators, we benefit from the reliability and adaptability conferred by evolution. We could be reminded daily—if we stopped to think about it—of the crucial roles that speech, language, and communication ability play in our social, emotional, intellectual, and working lives.

Of course, we usually don't stop to think about it. Communication is so much a part of our "selves" that the wonder of it becomes apparent only when we choose to study it. Readers of this book probably already have a better sense than most of the complexity of the processes that make us normal speakers, listeners, readers, writers, and communicators.

Most of you have chosen to embark on an effort to learn about what happens when—because of neurologic disease—the ability to communicate becomes impaired. Such impairments seem to insult and diminish the accomplishments of evolution. Fortunately, neurologic disease does not happen to an entire species. Unfortunately, it does happen to people, often in ways that disable, handicap, and devastate. It is one of life's paradoxes that our speech and language ability permits us to study the effects of its destruction and then share that knowledge

with others. Such study should be conducted with a keen awareness that our "subjects" deserve our commitment to use what we learn from them both responsibly and productively.

Don't misinterpret the word *introduction* in the title of this book. The contents herein represent more than a handshake. The text provides a solid foundation in the neurology of communication, as well as the causes, symptoms, diagnosis, and management of the most frequently encountered neurologic communication disorders. Serious students will leave this book prepared to study the disorders in greater depth. Aspiring clinicians will leave it prepared to develop the skills necessary to work with people whose lives are affected by the disorders.

Many texts about neurogenic communication disorders have come and gone over the years. Some texts became extinct because of limited substance, some because they failed to communicate their content effectively, and some because their content no longer reflected current knowledge, thinking, or practice. This sixth edition of *Introduction to Neurogenic Communication Disorders* has come to life because it reflects the evolution of several things. First, the assessment, diagnosis, understanding, and management of neurogenic communication disorders and their causes have changed in subtle to dramatic ways. Those changes are reflected in these pages.

Second, the range of communication disorders to which we must attend has broadened. When the first edition of this text was published, clinicians were “up to speed” if they knew something about aphasia, dysarthria, and apraxia of speech. We now appreciate, by virtue of their increasing prevalence and careful clinical observation and research, that right hemisphere lesions, traumatic brain injury, and dementia can affect communication in ways that often are not captured by our concepts of aphasia and motor speech disorders. Those changes are also reflected in these pages. Finally, Dr. Brookshire’s very special talents as a clinician, researcher, and teacher have evolved. No book reaches a second, let alone a sixth edition, without its author having gotten something right the first time and then building on it in a way that keeps the ever-evolving needs of its readers in mind. The content of this book reflects what a recognized expert believes are the core of “facts” and concepts necessary to a foundation

for understanding neurogenic communication disorders. You should also know that you will be learning from someone whose clarity of thought and expression have been, for many years, greatly respected and admired by his colleagues and appreciated by his students.

Be assured that the organization, style, and clarity of this book will meet your needs if you are coming to this complex subject for the first time. I suspect this book also will become a friend and valuable resource to those of you who already have or will develop a lasting interest in neurogenic communication disorders. It almost certainly will contribute to your own evolution as students, teachers, researchers, or clinicians.

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Preface

I have written this book to provide its readers with a general understanding of neurogenic communication disorders—their causes, symptoms, typical course, treatment, and outcome. I have tried to be practical about what I have included in this book. I have tried to include material that I believe to be both important and useful to those who are beginning their study of neurogenic communication disorders. My decisions regarding what to include and what to leave out no doubt reflect my personal biases about who, how, and why we treat. It also reflects my experiences in thirty-some years of teaching university students about neurogenic communication disorders and my sense of what has seemed important to them.

I have not tried to identify all areas of controversy, and sometimes I may have presented my own opinions as facts. One fact, I think, is inescapable—that even such seeming facts as the pyramidal system and apraxia of speech are in one sense matters of opinion or convenient fictions. What passes for “fact” in the scientific and clinical literature about neurogenic communication disorders (and in the literature relating to many other areas of knowledge as well) is in truth opinion, intuition, or someone’s best guess about what seems true. The content of this book represents my best guess about what is likely to prove true over time,

and I hope that I have guessed right more often than not.

I believe that clinical competence comes as much (or more) from one’s development of intuitions based on regularities observed across patients than from reading the literature. I also believe that treatment of neurogenic communication disorders combines *art* and *science*, and that many empirically verified facts may prove trivial or irrelevant to helping the neurologically compromised adult become a better communicator.

This book is neither a training manual nor a catalog of techniques. Reading it will not make the reader competent to evaluate, diagnose, or treat patients with neurogenic communication disorders. No book or collection of books can do that. Clinical competence comes from blending knowledge acquired from clinical and scientific literature, supervised clinical training, and independent clinical experience. This book will, I hope, help the student get started on the road to clinical competence by providing a basic understanding of what neurogenic communication disorders are, what the individuals who have them are like, and how neurogenic communication disorders may be measured and treated.

Now for an editorial note. The word “aphasic” is an adjective, and not a noun. I strongly believe that using the word “aphasic” as a noun, as in