

## Preface

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*Neurology Oral Boards Review: A Concise and Systematic Approach to Clinical Practice* is written specifically to assist neurologists preparing for the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) Part II (Oral) Examination. This examination is clinically based, so a concise review of relevant topics and examination strategies to maximize one's chances of passing the examination is relevant. Most neurologists taking the Oral Boards are either in fellowship programs or in active clinical practice, so time constraints are usually a factor while attempting to prepare for the examination. This book will also be beneficial to the practicing general neurologist, neurology resident, or medical student looking for a concise and structured approach to clinical problem solving in neurology.

*Neurology Oral Boards Review: A Concise and Systematic Approach to Clinical Practice* is written in three parts: Part I provides a detailed description of the examination and advice on how to successfully approach it. This is important in an oral examination, as one's knowledge has to "shine through" the anxieties of the occasion. Having a systematic but thorough approach facilitates factual recall and allows the candidate to adequately cover the necessary points needed to pass this examination. There is also a recommended study approach that takes in mind the difficulties of dedicating a time block to prepare for the Oral Boards while in post-residency training or practice. This method provides a time frame for study review that would hopefully reduce the likelihood of incomplete preparation, resulting in loss of self-confidence.

Parts II and III provide clinical case vignettes similar to what the candidate is expected to deal with on the Oral Boards. The candidate is not always expected to obtain the diagnosis to the vignette case since most are somewhat open-ended and subject to several differential diagnoses/therapeutic approaches. ABPN expects examinees to localize the plausible disease processes, provide reasonable differential diagnoses, indicate which investigations may help in establishing a diagnosis, deduce management/treatment plans, and provide information on prognosis, including patient/family counseling. These are fundamental aspects in the training and practice of neurologists that all candidates should be familiar with. Unlike in "real life,"

where the physician may have days, weeks, or months to consider several plausible explanations for a clinical presentation, the candidate has to quickly exhibit a broad knowledge of neurological practice. In fact, a large proportion of the vignettes have acute presentations and are potentially treatable, emphasizing the importance of early diagnosis. A synopsis is provided at the end of each case to highlight important points.

Parts II and III are divided into Emergencies and General Neurology, with each section divided based on topics. Having a separate section for emergencies was done in order to prepare the candidate to think critically when faced with a neurological emergency, putting resuscitation, patient safety, and rapid high-yield investigations at the top of the list, as expected by the examiners. Showing inadequate knowledge/approach in a neurological emergency may compromise a candidate's chances of passing the Oral Boards. The General Neurology section contains a broad range of topics that are likely to be tested on the Oral Boards. This section does not provide for all diagnoses in neurology, but covers a breadth as experienced in hospital and outpatient clinical settings.

The candidate can use this book as a concise review or self-assessment tool. The former approach would be useful for the busy neurologist with insufficient time to review reference texts who may be looking for "high-yield" information, whereas the latter approach may favor the candidate seeking a "last-minute" test prior to the examination. I suggest reading *Neurology Oral Boards Review: A Concise and Systematic Approach to Clinical Practice* initially as a study guide, as this may identify areas of relative weakness that would require more extensive study. The book can be subsequently used as an assessment tool in a format similar to the actual examination in the weeks prior to the test. A reference/bibliography list appears at the beginning of the book. This list is not exhaustive, but provides respected sources of information in neurology. These books can be used for more detailed information on the topics addressed in this book.

The ABPN Part II (Oral) Boards may sound daunting, but about 75 to 80% of candidates pass every year. The examiners are not trying to fail candidates and understand that the anxieties involved may affect true performance. All candidates, by virtue of completing residency training in neurology, are capable of passing the examination and have the knowledge to do so. The most important factor is being organized, systematic, and thorough. Remember, breadth of information and competence are being assessed. It is my sincere hope that candidates are able to reach their goals and pass the Oral Boards with the aid of this book.

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