
Preface

The hand is extremely involved in our daily lives because of its vital and sophisticated functional role. With the growing expectation in society of a life without disability and handicap, hand function has become increasingly important over the past decades. The accurate assessment of hand function is very important for establishing strategies to maximize functional potential and evaluating treatment and the progress of disease.

The evaluation of hand function is of critical importance in determining the extent of functional loss in patients with many rheumatic and neurologic diseases and traumatic injuries and in assessing the outcome of some surgical and rehabilitative procedures. Thus, the clinical assessment of hand function remains complex and controversial. This book of practical information will be very useful in physicians' and in healthcare professionals' daily practice.

There are four main sections in this book: Basic principles of hand function, hand function assessment in clinical assessment, hand function and imaging outcomes, and appendices. The authors approach their subjects in an especially practical dimension. Because hand assessment is performed in the daily practice of many areas, such as rheumatology, physical and rehabilitation medicine, orthopaedic surgery, plastic and reconstructive surgery and neurology, this book is written by a multidisciplinary team with adult and pediatric rheumatologists, physiatrists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, hand therapists, neuroscientists and neurologists.

Many clinicians and healthcare practitioners insist on the evaluation of outcomes based on questionnaires for the functional status of patients. Questionnaires provide us with better information on what our patients truly experience in their daily lives. The appendices of this book include seven famous and practical scales for hand assessment, all of which were validated in many different kinds of hand disorders, such as rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, systemic sclerosis, psoriatic arthritis, geriatric and pediatric hand disorders, hand tendon injuries, stroke, tetraplegia, diabetes mellitus, carpal tunnel syndrome and haemodialysis patients.

The goal of this book is to present recent practical information to assess hand function in daily practice and scientific research. I hope it will help in accurate and practical evaluation of hand function and the interpretation of functional outcomes in clinical practice.

I wish to thank the chapter authors assembled in this book for graciously giving their time and sharing their experiences.

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Hand Function

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