

Neurocritical care as a subspecialty has grown rapidly over the last two decades with the advent of newer monitoring, diagnostic, and therapeutic modalities in a variety for brain and spinal cord injury paradigms. The number of training programs and neurocritical care units has evolved over the last few years. The spectrum of diseases encompassed by the discipline is broad and includes traumatic brain injury, subarachnoid, intracerebral, and intraventricular hemorrhage, large hemispheric infarctions, status epilepticus, infections, and neuromuscular disorders such as Guillain-Barre syndrome and myasthenia gravis. Time is of the essence for rapid diagnoses and therapeutic interventions in many of these patients. The care provided to these patients is frequently multidisciplinary and includes emergency medical services personnel, emergency medicine physicians, neurologists, neurosurgeons, anesthesiologists, critical care physicians, and critical care nurses. Although the need for specialized care of this challenging subset of patients is clearly recognized, much is required for the education of first-line physicians and other health care providers in the importance of early recognition and timely therapeutic intervention in patients experiencing acute neurological deterioration.

The *Handbook of Neurocritical Care* should serve as a quick reference guide for those involved in the care of critically ill neurological and neurosurgical patients. It is not meant to substitute for a full-length text in the discipline. This handbook provides an algorithmic approach incorporating ancillary investigations to confirm clinical diagnosis and to provide appropriate management of acute neurological diseases for first-line health care providers. Tables and illustrations are provided for quick and easy bedside reference for residents and fellows-in-training. Staff in units other than neurology and neurosurgery who are involved in the management of neurologically ill patients will also find this book helpful.

In an attempt to present succinct information, contributing authors for the *Handbook of Neurocritical Care* are both trainees and faculty from our Johns Hopkins team. Key Points at the end of each chapter highlighting the essential elements should serve as a quick summary for the reader. We hope you find this handbook useful.

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