

The “atypical parkinsonian disorders,” previously known as “Parkinson plus syndromes,” are characterized by a rapidly evolving parkinsonism that usually has a poor or transient response to dopaminergic therapy and often associates with one or more atypical features. These disorders may be difficult to accurately diagnose, but an early and correct diagnosis is relevant for both patients and physicians, since it allows for appropriate management and prognosis, which in turn, improves patients and families quality of life. An accurate diagnosis also allows patients to participate in research and may increase survival.

This book, *Atypical Parkinsonian Disorders: Clinical and Research Aspects*, the first of its kind, provides an all-encompassing view of the current status of atypical parkinsonian disorders from both clinical and research viewpoints. Its goals are threefold: (1) to provide critical, state-of-the-art insight into both the clinical and research aspects of the atypical parkinsonian disorders; (2) to increase clinicians’ index of suspicion by providing them with appropriate tools for an accurate diagnosis; and (3) to enlist new researchers who will further our knowledge on the etiopathogenesis of these devastating disorders and hopefully allow for the identification of new therapeutic paradigms.

The chapters have been written by world-leading experts in their fields, and their efforts have culminated in a truly unique compilation of what is currently known about the historic aspects, epidemiology, neuropathology, genetics, neuropsychological, neuropsychiatric, ophthalmologic, neurologic, and radiologic diagnostic evaluations and therapeutic approaches, as well as overall understanding of atypical parkinsonian disorders. We anticipate that the enclosed DVD, containing visual and auditory aids, will help clinicians, fellows, residents, students, and neuroscience researchers alike to characterize and differentiate the various atypical parkinsonian disorders. Audio segments will be helpful to characterize and distinguish the diverse speech disturbances found in these disorders. Current controversies and the role of genetics and neurological and pathological phenotypes in the nosologic classification of these disorders as well as each chapter author’s view on where research should focus in the future are offered.

Movement disorder specialists, neurologists, neuro-ophthalmologists, neuropathologists, psychiatrists, neuropsychologists, geriatricians, and physical and occupational therapists alike may find these pages indispensable. Clinicians, residents, and students may find the chapters on epidemiology, medical and physical history techniques, neuropsychiatric and neuropsychological testing, praxis, visuospatial cognition, neuro-ophthalmology, and speech and language assessments invaluable tools for clinical diagnosis, while the disease-specific videos, tables, and figures may provide them with a visual handbook for frequent reference. Researchers and fellows will gain further insight into their own work, which will add to the progression of the knowledge presented in these pages.

*Atypical Parkinsonian Disorders* would have not been possible without the hard work and dedication of friends and colleagues who graciously provided state-of-the-art chapters, excellent figures, and unique video and audio segments that we believe are crucial tools for learning, teaching, and research. I want particularly to thank Dr. Daniel Tarsy for encouraging me to edit this exciting book. I also want to acknowledge the help provided by Theresa Perry and Whitney Rogers in its preparation, and the support from Michael Gruenthal and the University of Louisville. Finally, I want to thank patients and caregivers for their time and dedication to our research and for their patience waiting for a therapeutic paradigm shift. It is hoped that their increasing participation in research and the knowledge summarized in this book will provide the needed enthusiasm to attract new researchers into this field who will further our understanding of these diseases so they can soon be eradicated from the face of the earth.

Carol Frattali, co-author of Chapter 16 on speech and language, passed away suddenly while this book was in press. Carol was a superb clinician, valued colleague, and was developing a new program of research at the National Institutes of Health when she was taken from us. Carol was not afraid to begin a new research project, no matter how difficult the challenge. I am sure that attitude kept her young at heart and permeated all facets of her life. She was inspirational to patients, colleagues and friends, and we all surely miss her.

*Irene Litvan, MD*