

## Clinical Communication in Medicine

**Edited by Jo Brown, Lorraine M Noble, Alexia Papageorgiou, Jane Kidd**  
**Wiley Blackwell 2016**  
**Price £34.99. Pp 280**  
**ISBN 978 1 118 72824 6**

Eighty per cent of diagnoses are made from the history – our most powerful diagnostic technology. Clinical communication is a mainstay of modern health-care education, but finding a suitable introductory yet substantive text is a challenge for both novices and seasoned practitioners. Paradoxically communication skills textbooks can be inaccessible, so *Clinical Communication in Medicine* is a welcome publication. It provides a foundation for a complete course while chapters serve as discrete introductions to each topic.

Bearing the hallmark of the UK Clinical Council of Clinical Communication, it is an authoritative text. The range of authors is wide, although the over-emphasis on the

medical perspective may be a shortcoming. This is reflected by the short section on interprofessional communication, an area particularly needing increased awareness among clinicians.

Even so, this is a significant and welcome book. Excellently structured, it provides historical context to the development of the doctor–patient consultation, elucidation of the individual skills, and analysis of the teaching and assessment of clinical communication.

While the typeface and layout convey a sense of density, the prose is highly readable. Each chapter is comprehensively referenced, making it suitable for teachers and students. Genuinely, it deserves a place in everyone's list of essential textbooks.

Used in conjunction with the UK Council's website, it provides an excellent resource.  
*John Frain, Derwent Valley Medical Practice, Derby*



## Re-thinking Autism: Diagnosis, Identity and Equality

**Edited by Katherine Runswick-Cole, Rebecca Mallett, Sami Timimi**  
**Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2016**  
**Price £18.99. Pp 336**  
**978 1 84905 581 9**

Autism seems to be everywhere at the moment, with many different views on history and variability of the condition together with the joys and challenges of being or living with a person with an autism spectrum condition. With up to one in 68 of us meeting current diagnostic criteria it is perhaps no surprise.

*Re-thinking Autism: Diagnosis, Identity and Equality* offers a robust critique of the autism 'industry'. It explores what autism is, how it is diagnosed and how we might help people who have or think they have autism spectrum condition. The editors and authors are well known in their fields and a number carefully weave personal and professional connections to autism spectrum conditions into their writing.

The overarching, unsurprising message is that people with 'autism' are unique and that services should be offered based on need not diagnosis.

This is not a book for the faint-hearted or those who unquestioningly find the 'A' word helpful. The tone of some of the writing is often strident and some chapters invite mobilization against current developments in education and mental health services.

Whatever your perspective, this book will challenge you to unpick why you believe what you believe about autism spectrum conditions and other psychiatric diagnoses. It provides a helpful punctuation to inform our practices regarding the developmental, emotional, educational and family needs of people who think and relate 'differently'.  
*Sarah Helps, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, London*

## A Dictionary of Neurological Signs (4th edn)

**AJ Larner**  
**Springer 2016**  
**Price £97.00. Pp 347**  
**ISBN 978 3 319 29819 1**

We tend to reach for a dictionary only when confronted with an unfamiliar word, and *A Dictionary of Neurological Signs* can be used in this manner. For the novice, the neurological lexicon presents a bewildering mix of eponyms and descriptive terms, so an alphabetical, user-friendly reference

can help trainees keep up. However, only by reading the book cover to cover can readers absorb the wealth of information contained in this surprisingly slim volume.

The dictionary is practical and concise. Each entry succinctly defines a specific sign, briefly describes the clinical technique required to elicit it, lists commonly associated signs and symptoms, describes its known pathophysiological and neuroanatomical basis, gives a differential diagnosis and some remarks about treatment. Where possible, the index sign's diagnostic accuracy and reliability is assessed. Most useful is the cross-references at the end of each entry linking interrelated signs. When read sequentially (perhaps the best way to read the book), this gives a fairly comprehensive overview of specific neurological disorders.

Some may find the dictionary format taxing, particularly if using the book as a standalone text, and trainees may wish to supplement their reading with a book using a case-based approach. Either way, *A Dictionary of Neurological Signs* will surely enrich trainees' clinical skills throughout their career.

*Michel Toledano, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, London*