

Quarantine

What is old is new

AUTHOR Ian A. Cameron

PUBLISHER New World Publishing,
PO Box 36075, Halifax, NS
B3J 3S9

TELEPHONE 877 211-3334

FAX 902 576-2095

WEBSITE

www.newworldpublishing.com

PUBLISHED 2007/208 pp/\$19.95

OVERALL RATING Very good

STRENGTHS Well researched and referenced

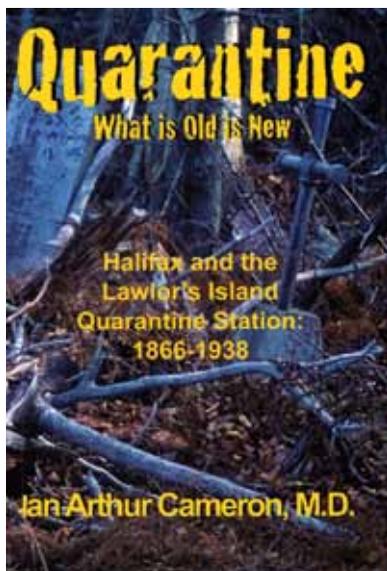
WEAKNESSES Arranged chronologically; too detailed in parts

AUDIENCE Medical professionals with an interest in humanities; historians, amateur or professional

In an age that has brought the world severe acute respiratory syndrome and the threat of pandemic influenza, Dr Ian Cameron's historical account of quarantine on Lawlor's Island sheds important light on how communicable disease was managed in Canada during the great period of immigrant expansion. The story is concurrently the history of communicable disease and maritime travel, of health care in Nova Scotia, and of the growth of the Dominion of Canada through immigration.

The American philosopher George Santayana once cynically noted, "History is a pack of lies about events that never happened told by people who weren't there." Ensuring the accuracy of the information contained within, Dr Cameron has made a meticulous study of available historical references and relied primarily on first-hand accounts.

Dr Cameron has written a definitive and complete account of the



only substantial quarantine station on Canada's Atlantic coast at the turn of the 20th century. In introducing his book, he reflects on his emotional connection to and curiosity about remnants of old structures that once served the island. In cataloguing the chronology, there are at times tales of mismanagement and ineptitude. More commonly, the reader is given an account of disaster averted. Some anecdotes are heart-wrenching, involving loss, suffering, and despair, and not uncommonly the victims are young children. Intertwined with those are stories of hope and perseverance in the face of adversity. The account of the arrival and quarantine of the Doukhobors is a particularly poignant tale of human migration.

We live in a time when fear of contagion is relatively subdued. To learn the lessons of the effective containment of communicable disease in maritime Canada a full century ago serves to help us gain an appreciation of our public health system today. More important, it beckons us to properly prepare for the next pandemic.

—David Martell MD CCFP

Dr Martell practises family medicine in Lunenburg, NS.

The psychiatry of stroke

AUTHOR D. Peter Birkett

PUBLISHER Routledge, 270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016, USA

TELEPHONE 800 665-1148

FAX 212 563-2269

WEBSITE www.routledge.com

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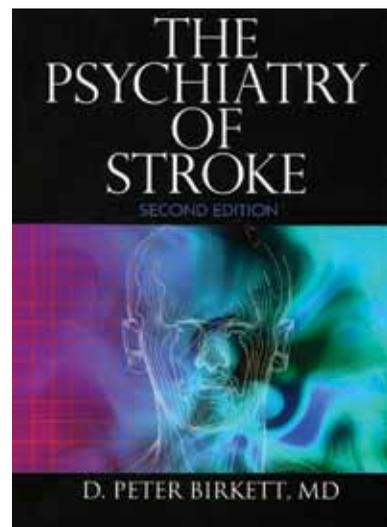
OVERALL RATING Good

STRENGTHS Comprehensive and well organized; easy access to various topics of interest

WEAKNESSES Tries to reach too many audiences, creating an uneven approach

AUDIENCE Health care professionals and lay public

The second edition of Peter Birkett's *The Psychiatry of Stroke* is a comprehensive, well-organized approach to the topic. The author, a psychiatrist, has vast experience in working with stroke survivors. The book is organized into 3 main sections. The first section seems to be aimed at a lay audience, as it uses basic definitions to explain the background, the causative



factors, and the basic science of stroke. There is also a chapter that provides a brief overview of neuroanatomy and neuropsychopharmacology.

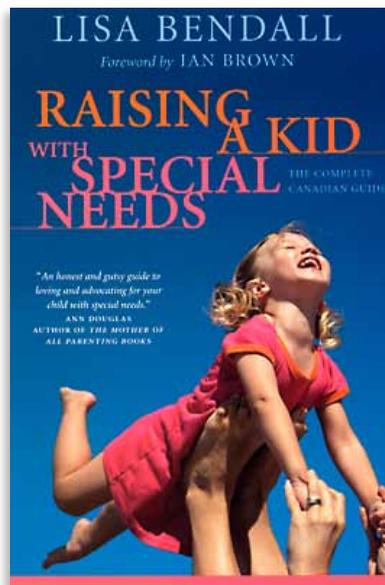
The second section, "Psychiatric Syndromes," shines with chapters dedicated to common psychiatric syndromes associated with stroke (eg, depression, anxiety, dementia, disinhibition, sexuality, anger, and violence), providing information on causes, management, and a summary for each. This is of tremendous benefit as a quick reference for all practitioners who do not treat stroke patients on a regular basis. The language in this section can be a challenge to even the most sophisticated nonpractitioner.

The last section, "Outcome and Effects," explains the process of recovery, the spectrum of care, the role of family, and the stroke treatment team, as well as the legal, ethical, and financial issues common to stroke patients. This section, however, appears to be geared mostly toward a lay audience.

To try to reach all audiences the book contains a 22-page glossary and 47 pages of references, mostly from the scientific literature. The author acknowledges the attempt at broad appeal and the inherent risks of doing so, stating the following: "The wide aim at readership must produce inconsistencies in voice and sophistication, and errors in style. I hope that these errors are in the direction of oversimplification rather than obscurity." Notwithstanding these faults, this book is a good overview of an important topic and an excellent reference on psychiatry of stroke for practitioners who occasionally deal with stroke patients.

—Jim Ruderman MD CCFP FCFP

Dr Ruderman is an Associate Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto in Ontario.



Raising a kid with special needs

The complete Canadian guide

AUTHOR Lisa Bendall
PUBLISHER Key Porter Books,
 6 Adelaide St E, 10th Floor,
 Toronto, ON M5C 1H6
TELEPHONE 416 862-7777
WEBSITE www.keyporter.com
PUBLISHED 2008/208 pp/\$21.95

OVERALL RATING Excellent
STRENGTHS Well-organized source of information
WEAKNESSES None
AUDIENCE Family physicians and parents of disabled children

You will find no tragedy or sorrow in this spirited survival guide. It is a feisty and loving handbook that all Canadian families raising disabled children should have at their fingertips. This applies to doctors, too. Do family physicians know that mothers of disabled children can recall the moment they

received their children's diagnoses like it was yesterday? And that even years later these mothers can still quote verbatim what their doctors advised? Those words, at such critical times, sway parental expectations for their children's future. Accordingly, this book should be on every physician's shelf, in multiple copies for generous distribution. Arriving at this place of disability, Bendall tells her readers, "[this] happened to you without your bidding," and there is a lot to learn, quickly. Herein is her purpose in writing.

In a voice that is compassionate and compelling, Bendall draws on first-hand knowledge and experience with disability. An experienced writer with a reputable publishing track record, she has compiled a book that is well written, carefully organized, and pleasingly packaged. Divided into 10 sections along a life-development continuum, it starts at the "Beginning" (the diagnosis) and ends with "Coming of Age" (the future). With a mix of personal stories, parental "pearls" of wisdom, and lists of resources, she delivers more information than narrative alone could offer. The expertise and primary caregiving role of mothers is emphasized, especially by the 10 main interviewees whose stories grace each chapter; however, mothers are subsumed in the collective of "parents" and "families." I would have wished to see that gendered contribution made more explicit.

In presenting disability as a public issue and not a private matter, this guide is very much a book of these times. This book offers a large amount of information, not only for the parents for whom it is mostly targeted, but also for the many health-related, educational, and social service professionals who are an inextricable part of those relationships. It is highly recommended.

—Melanie Panitch DSW

Dr Panitch is Director of the School of Disability Studies at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ont.