

BOOK REVIEW

RTC Field Manual in Rehabilitation, Version 1:1, Bengt Sjölund, pp. 419, 2007. Price: Free. ISBN: 13 978 87 90878 17 7. Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims, Copenhagen, Denmark.

This manual provides a rather complete review of different medical and rehabilitation problems, measures and therapies related to torture victims. It has a new and practically oriented approach. As stated in the Introduction, problems and advice for action and therapy are presented separately for: (i) health-care assistants (or laypersons); (ii) healthcare professionals; and (iii) physicians with relevant specialization. This is a useful approach even though it leads to some overlap.

The presentation of information is based on the concepts of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), with special chapters on body function, activity/participation, and contextual factors. Some impairments (body function level), however, do not have specific rehabilitation aspects, but are limited only to assessment and therapy at the level of body function. As this is a manual on rehabilitation, that approach could have been explained further in the Introduction. At present that part of the manual is more like a short handbook of medical care. In future revision of the manual, it may be of value to consider including some further comments and references to the other chapter, in order to include some comprehensive rehabilitation aspects also for impairments (body function), even if that creates some overlap. The chapter on activity/participation has a more comprehensive approach. Some headlines are not logical, for example the headline "Disability". Disability according to ICF is an umbrella term for problems in all different areas of ICF.

Disability as a concept and term should already have been discussed in the Introduction, now it is found in the Annex. There are quite extensive sections on specific problems related to previous experiences, which are valuable, but which are difficult to characterize under activity/participation, and might have been better placed in a separate chapter (or sub-chapter). Of particular importance and value is the chapter on Context, which deals with specific environmental factors related to the situation of different groups of individuals (e.g. those involved in armed conflict, domestic violence, stress, torture, violation of human rights). Specific therapies are presented in the final chapter. Here, it is noted that "Rehabilitation and Physical Medicine", which is used as headline, is not a therapy, but would have been better mentioned in a specific section and not under Therapies.

This manual has its place in the management and rehabilitation of torture victims. Some structural aspects could be improved in the next edition; indeed the authors invite comments and suggestions for modification, and are thus well aware that this is a first version. As such it will still be very useful; it fills a gap in the literature and will most likely be of practical value to the different professionals (and laypersons) engaged in the management of torture victims. It is especially appreciated that it is available free of charge online (at www.rct.dk).

Gunnar Grimby, MD, PhD

Department of Rehabilitation Medicine,
Institute of Neuroscience and Physiology
Sahlgrenska Academy at University of Gothenburg
SE-413 45 Gothenburg, Sweden
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