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Introduction

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Few rehabilitation professionals receive specialized training in litigation issues during the course of their graduate training. However, professionals are becoming increasingly involved in helping courts address a wide spectrum of legal issues. Frequently, professionals are asked to help courts understand how much a person has been affected by injury. Testimony about the effects of injury can sway juries to give awards ranging from nothing to millions of dollars. In many cases, professionals help courts decide whether a patient is capable of managing personal affairs. Questions arise relating to management of finances, compliance with treatment and medication, and driving. Efforts to avoid court involvement may end up in failure since many courts have the power to order professionals to appear as witnesses.

This special issue of *NeuroRehabilitation* was developed as part of an effort to provide more information about the legal system. Rather than attempt to cover many topics giving little detail, we've chosen to focus on a specific few. Taylor provides an overview of the litigation process along with suggestions for improving one's effec-

tiveness as an expert witness. Sbordone and Purisch present a case for developing opinions based on a broad spectrum of information, rather than test results alone. Hart and Nagele discuss methods of determining competency, while providing a model (CORE) for valid assessment. In many cases, experts are asked to determine how a person is different in comparison to before the onset of their neurological condition. Ruff and colleagues discuss methods for estimation of pre-morbid functioning. Many people believe that motivation issues are a greater concern in litigation. Millis and Putnam discuss methods of evaluating patients' motivation levels particularly in regard to mild brain injury. Finally, Binder and Burton discuss strategies for giving testimony, and provide guidelines helpful in the development of fair medicolegal reports.

Approaching the witness stand in a courtroom or sitting before a group of attorneys poised to take your deposition is rarely a pleasant event. We are hopeful that the information contained in this issue will contribute to a more positive future experience.