

## Book Review

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**L. Hobbs, S. McDonough and A. O’Callaghan**, *Life after injury, a rehabilitation manual for the injured and their helpers*. Third World Network, Penang. ISBN 983-9747-77-0. <http://www.twinside.org.sg>

The book describes the management of injured persons in the third world setting. The problems are described in a well-organized manner. The approach is holistic although the accent is obvious on physical aspects. In the book three goals are set for rehabilitation: healing, becoming able and rejoining the community. Although mentioned as separate goals and the goals are seen as links in a chain, the more specific description of the goals elucidates that they are very intermingled and the basis for rejoining the community is already started in the healing process. The first aspect of healing is to restore the body, mind, spirit and family life to health. Thus, attention is already asked in the first phase of rehabilitation for integration and participation of the injured.

The holistic approach and the attention for participation is in conformity with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The ICF is often used to organize rehabilitation in the first and second world settings. The interesting approach in this book is that it encourages the proxis (family, villagers) to an active involvement in the rehabilitation process. This approach not only makes rehabilitation possible in countries where medical facilities are rare, but also starts the integration process right at the beginning of the rehabilitation. The positive and proactive attitude is a way to prevent deterioration and a way to cope with the problems. It stimulates mutual understanding and thus prerequisites for participation.

The book describes possible management of injured persons in an easily comprehensible way and the illustrations used support this very well. This book can reach a large public as is the intention of the writers.

The book has an injury (like spinal cord injury, brain damage, amputations, nerve injuries, burns) and problem (pain, pressure sores and infections) oriented approach. The book gives a description of each of these injuries and problems and possible treatments. It continues with more general treatment possibilities, like casts, splints, but also mobility, doing activities in daily life and work. It ends with advice on how to set up a local rehabilitation setting and improving quality of care.

After the injury and the transfer to a hospital the advice is to leave the hospital as soon as possible (based on the high risk of infection within the hospitals) and an active approach of the proxis is recommended. Since the book is injury and problem oriented a good insight of the problems is necessary for proper treatment. Due to the aim of the book there is nothing written on the diagnostic procedures and the uncertainty in the early phase after injury about the full extent of the problems. Big injuries can easily mask smaller injuries, although in a later phase of rehabilitation these can be bottle necks in improving. There is a risk of not being aware of differential development of the recovery course. Another hazard is the combination of several types of injuries influencing each other. To make the right choice in treatment is not always easy and therapies can negatively interfere with each other. Some warning remarks are made in the book, but one major one should be added: if the course is different from expected consult a specialist!

Overall it is a recommendable book for the target group, the third world. For the “old world readers” it is recommendable to stimulate a positive approach of the injured persons and their families.

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