

HANDBOOK OF (CENTRAL) AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER: VOLUMES 1 & 2

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San Diego: Plural Publishing; 2007
ISBN 1-59756-056-1

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Central auditory processing disorder (CAPD) is a relatively common condition, occurring in perhaps 2-5% of school-aged children and in at least similar numbers of elderly persons. Over the past decade it has become more commonly identified and managed in developed countries, partly due to the publication of widely read

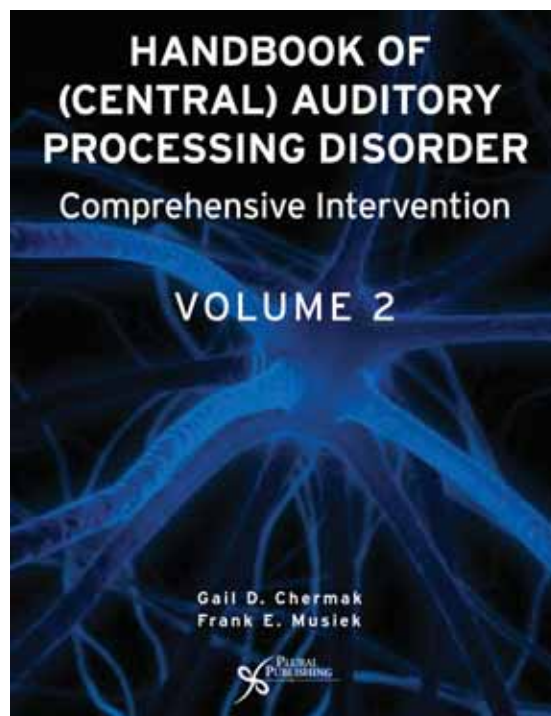
professional position papers and technical reports on the topic.

Reading the two impressive volumes (870 pages in total) of this comprehensive new handbook left this reviewer with two main thoughts. One reflection was that there is now a large body of well-conducted scientific research work that supports the notion that CAPD is a distinct clinical disorder with well established procedures for diagnosis and treatment.

Volume 1 provides a complete overview of the physiological and psychoacoustic foundations of work in this area, as well as a detailed description of CAPD assessment techniques. The chapters on the differential diagnosis of CAPD, attention deficit disorder, auditory neuropathy and language disorders are especially useful for the clinician.

Volume 2 provides possibly the most detailed coverage to date of treatment options for children and adults with CAPD. These include auditory training, cognitive training (such as techniques for improving memory and attention) and improving the auditory environment (such as via personal FM systems and classroom loudspeakers). All the chapters in both volumes are written to a very high standard and the Handbook is an essential guide for experienced professionals who work extensively with persons with CAPD.

The second notion occurring to this reviewer was the question, 'Does this relate to the needs of individuals with hearing impairment in developing countries?' My answer was, 'Yes, it does.' Workers in developing countries are often at risk of exposure to industrial solvents (see Issue No. 4 of this Journal) that cause CAPD and impair speech understanding abilities in everyday life. Those of us who work in developing coun-



tries need to be alert to this ototoxic effect and consider ways we can provide prevention, assessment and rehabilitation options for exposed workers. In addition, school children in developing countries are often attending large, crowded and noisy classes - precisely the environments where CAPD will have the most adverse impacts.

Chapters 7 and 8 in Volume 2 give very practical advice on improvements that can help all children (but especially those with CAPD) gain better hearing in the classroom. Many of these enhancements involve collaborating with teachers to make low-cost, common sense changes to the classroom environment. In the years to come, CAPD is likely to be more frequently considered by those working in developing as well as developed countries. The Handbook of (Central) Auditory Processing Disorder fully describes our current knowledge of aetiology, assessment and treatment in this emerging area of clinical hearing health care practice.

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