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978-1-107-65988-9- Women with Epilepsy: A Practical Management Handbook

Edited by Esther Bui and Autumn Klein

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# Women with Epilepsy

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# Women with Epilepsy

## A Practical Management Handbook

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and up-to-date information which is in accord with accepted standards  
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that they plan to use.

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## Preface

This book began with a simple desire to create a practical, portable tool to help busy practitioners care for women with epilepsy. It was developed for neurologists, internists, obstetricians and gynecologists, family physicians, anesthesiologists, midwives, nurses, social workers, pharmacists, neonatologists, and all those who care for women with epilepsy. The diversity of our audience reflects the inherent multidisciplinary nature of this practice. Caring for women with epilepsy, especially during pregnancy, has challenges that many of us frequently feel ill-equipped to manage. Questions such as:

- How do hormones influence seizures, and how is this best managed?
- What is the teratogenicity of newer drugs such as topiramate or levetiracetam?
- What is the best form of birth control to use in women with epilepsy?
- How do I give my patient the best chance of seizure freedom during pregnancy?
- What factors can predict seizures in pregnancy?
- How do I manage seizures or status epilepticus in pregnancy especially during labor and delivery?
- Do hormone replacement therapies pose a risk for seizure exacerbation?

I still recall the many sleepless nights ruminating over whether I was providing the best possible care for these women. This culminated when a young pregnant patient of mine with epilepsy deteriorated into status epilepticus. The challenges of this, and many other cases, have catalyzed for me a strong desire to summarize key and critical concepts in the care of these women. I am grateful to have worked with world experts on these topics. They have successfully distilled key practice points and provided comprehensive basic science data, pregnancy registry data, and expert opinion to further enrich our understanding and ability to counsel patients. This book is designed as a quick, accessible, everyday, easy-to-use manual that puts the essentials of caring for women with epilepsy at one's fingertips.

On a very personal note, it is with a heavy heart that I conclude this preface with a tribute to Autumn Klein my co-editor. Autumn was a force to be reckoned with, one in a million, a unique person who had a remarkable ability to be on the leading edge of her own field and yet simultaneously filled with humility and a curiosity that easily engaged others to learn with her. Autumn and I mutually viewed this book to be a labor of love on a topic that we both were passionate about. We worked closely together over the past 2 years to bring this book to life. Autumn died in the Spring of 2013, before she could see the completion of this work. I know with certainty that she would have wanted to, as I do, dedicate this book to our daughters. To Cianna, know that despite all the awards, accolades, and tributes that your mother received, you were her greatest prize. To my own daughter Madelaine, this work and all others to follow would be meaningless without you. You are my own greatest life achievement. I want to thank my husband Carlo, who has tirelessly championed my hopes and dreams, my parents John and Ruth, who gave up their own dreams to allow me to follow mine, my brothers San, Mark, and Luke who lead a blazing trail for me to follow, and Nick Dunton at Cambridge University Press who recognized the potential in me.