

BOOK REVIEW

***The Guides Casebook, Third Edition*
American Medical Association**

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American Medical Association, *The Guides Casebook*, Third Edition. Author, Christopher Brigham. *Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment*, Sixth Edition, 2009, American Medical Association, ISBN 978-1-57947-890-2. BQ780P21007:12-08, Library of Congress book review.

The Sixth Edition of the AMA's *Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* is now available. This new edition of the *Guides* incorporates five significant changes to determine impairment:

1. Disablement as defined by the international classification of functioning, disability, and health (ICF).
2. Increased diagnosis-based impairments.
3. Reported simplicity.
4. Functionally based impairment ratings.
5. New methodological congruity within and among organ systems.

Furthermore, the Sixth Edition offers a diagnosis-based grid featuring five classes of impairment severity for each system.

Compared to the previous five editions of the *Guides*, the Sixth Edition requires one to significantly rethink one's approach to using the AMA impairment guidelines. Although some jurisdictions do not use the *Guides* as a standard physician reference to permanent impairment in regard to disability claims, personal injury, or workmen's compensation, approximately **80%** recommend use of the *Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment*.

The Guides Casebook, Third Edition, by Christopher Brigham, simplifies the complexity brought by the new edition of the *Guides*. *The Guides Casebook* features well-known reviewers and contributors. Gunnar Anderson, M.D., Ph.D., of Rush Presbyterian St. Luke's Medical Center, Chicago, Illinois, provides an excellent introduction. Dr. Anderson's comments are right on target for those experienced, "provides an opportunity to relate their understanding of the use of the *Guides*...particularly important with the extensive change reflected in the Sixth Edition."

The table of contents in *The Guides Casebook* outlines multiple pain-related impairments in addition to organ impairment evaluations. Chapter 14 is devoted to mental and behavioral disorders, Chapter 15 focuses on extensive upper extremity impairment, Chapter 16 discusses lower extremity extensive impairment, and Chapter 17 explores evaluating the spine and pelvis.

Chapter 3, "Pain-Related Impairment," addresses controversial topics such as fibromyalgia and posttraumatic (alleged) headache. The Fifth Edition of the *Guides* acknowledged that "while the concept of sensitization is extremely important to a conceptual understanding of chronic pain, there is currently no systematic way to incorporate it into impairment ratings" (page 568). The Sixth Edition, however, attempts to bring a pain rating back into the impairment rating system. For example, it addresses pain-related impairment and pain-related impairment (PRI) rating is not specifically excluded by relevant jurisdiction. According to Table 3-1 in the Sixth Edition of the *Guides*, pain-related impairment and whole person impairment based on PDQ (pain disability questionnaire) scoring between 1 and 70 is considered mild and results in 0% whole person permanent impairment. However, there is some rating now in a score greater than 70. An example of fibromyalgia in *The Guides Casebook*, Third Edition, states, "fibromyalgia sometimes is reported to occur after minor trauma; however, this apparent temporal relationship does not establish causation. To conclude, that fibromyalgia is caused by a minor trauma because the minor trauma preceded the onset of fibromyalgia is to engage in the fallacy of association being causal. Logicians call this fallacy in Latin post hoc ergo propter hoc, which means 'after this, therefore because of this.'"

Although this book is neither a lesson in Latin nor an incorporation of ratings of pain compared to prior editions, it is of great assistance in evaluating many common disorders. It will assist busy clinicians in mastering the learning curve required of the *Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment*, Sixth Edition. *The Guides Casebook* is not intended to address commonly asked questions of causation. Rather, its examples seek to objectively and reliably reproduce impairment ratings among independent evaluators. This is another giant step forward in the ever-evolving subspecialty field of impairment and disability ratings.

I highly recommend that users of the *AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment*, Sixth Edition, complement their use of the *Guides* with *The Guides Casebook*.

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