Reading the recent book by Professor J. Zakrzewska, one of the greatest international authorities for oral-medicine aspects of trigeminal neuralgia (TN), it becomes clear that everyday and systematic contacts with patients, as well as complete devotion to this complex and horrific state are prerequisites for acquisition of skills and knowledge required for diagnosing TN. I have a hint of personal experience from one London afternoon in Professor Zakrzewska’s TN clinic, which she often co-chairs with a neurosurgeon, where I saw the extent of focused effort and strict adhesion to developed protocols needed to diagnose and manage TN. Protocols for orofacial pain studies, support groups’ experiences, detailed description of procedures and success rates of different treatment modalities, these are all contained in this comprehensive book. The most successful treatment method is also the most dangerous (micro vascular decompression), therefore one whole chapter is devoted to joint decision making. Systematic support and providing information are of utmost importance, due to the treatment limitations.

Nevertheless, at least equally important as facts mentioned above, this book offers distressing first hand testimonies from TN patients, about despair and unbearable infernal horrors they suffer. These experiences are so vivid, making the reader shiver for pains TN patients go through. The book is enriched by allegorical cartoons that symbolize, in their own auto-ironic manner, the struggle against nearly overwhelming despair. Let us not forget that book’s subtitle contains words “World’s Worst Pain”.

This work is exceptional also by the fact that it is written for 2 distinct audiences. It offers the TN patients every information written in simple and lay manner. But it also contains all important data intended for neurologist, neurosurgeon, oral medicine specialist, oral surgeon, general medical practitioner and general dental practitioner who seek for relevant facts in order to help their patients complaining about similar symptoms.

Ivan Alajbeg
alajbeg@sfzg.hr

I have trigeminal neuralgia, so it was particularly interesting to me. But the truth is, they just don't know a lot about the disease so a lot of this is conjuncture, or based on the best medical evidence available at the time of publication. Has some very good brain pictures showing exactly what cranial nerve is affected and where it runs through the skull and on the face, An interesting read, though I can't imagine that many people would be interested in the subject.Â From cover to cover, this book is full of practical hints about pain control.
management and facts about diagnosis and causes of neuralgia, medications, surgical treatments and more. Recent statistics about surgical procedures are included.