

Handbook of Clinical Health Psychology. Edited by THEODORE MILLON, CATHERINE GREEN and ROBERT MEAGHER. New York: Plenum Press. 1982. Pp 608. \$50.00.

The evolution of clinical psychology has included a rapidly expanding involvement in areas of health care beyond the confines of the psychiatric or subnormality hospital. Clinical health psychology may be an unfamiliar title for such activities, but it reflects the intention of this book's editors to challenge 'the hegemony of the 'behavioural medicine' approach to the psychological study and treatment of the physically ill'. They attempt to achieve this aim with diverse collection of contributions organised into sections on the 'knowledge domain' of the field, clinical settings involved, and some of the functions it encompasses.

The range of orientations represented here is such that the reader will doubtless find some chapters of interest. For the present reviewer, such chapters were those which challenged all theoretical hegemonies by attempting, in the words of Shontz, to take the 'insider's' rather than the 'outsider's' perspective, concerning themselves with the personal meaning of the individual's situation rather than viewing him as a passive victim of life events or disease processes. Other authors, such as Kinsman *et al*, clearly demonstrate the value of a psychological approach, based on detailed assessment of the individual patient, in the management of physical illness. This chapter also, however, exemplifies an irritating feature of this book that familiarity is assumed with particular American psychological tests and their subscales often referred to by abbreviations.

To challenge hegemonies is a thoroughly commendable ambition. However, it may result in a hegemony being replaced by a disparate pot-pourri of approaches with little in the way of an integrating framework, particularly when, as here, 47 contributors are involved in the enterprise. The integrative potential of the particular conceptual models favoured by the editors is barely examined beyond their presentation in the introductory chapter. Therefore, while this is a handbook in the sense that the word is inappropriately used to describe a weighty, expensive tome laden with references, the budding practitioner of clinical health psychology may find it a guide to the field which, having the faults of its virtues, provides few clear directions.

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Psychosomatic Disorders: A Psychophysiological Approach to Etiology and Treatment. Edited by STEPHEN N. HAYNES and LINDA GANNON. New York: Praeger. 1981. Pp 546. £22.50.

A few years ago a reviewer opening a book with this title would have known what to expect: chapters by psychiatrists on the psychodynamic and physiological aspects of a limited number of medical disorders accepted as having a psychosomatic aetiology. Now, one finds a very different but increasingly familiar pattern. The editors are both clinical psychologists and most of the chapters are by psychologists or by medical scientists. The medical basis of each disorder is discussed incisively and traditional aetiological theories are examined sceptically and then largely dismissed. The emphasis is on psychophysiology and behavioural techniques. This book is then a product of 'behavioural medicine', that is to say, clinical psychology in the general hospital. The choice of topics includes conditions with a pathological basis (asthma, essential hypertension, cardiac arrhythmias and gastrointestinal problems), functional disorders (insomnia, sexual dysfunction, obesity, tension headache) as well as conditions with mixed or less certain aetiology (menstrual disorders, pain, migraine).

There must be a welcome for these critical and systematic reviews, although there must also be some doubts about a divorce from psychiatry and medicine which results in a number of the chapters failing to convey the clinical significance of their subject matter. It may well be that psychiatrists are not the best people to pursue such research, but it would be a pity if their unique perspective of medicine and psychology is altogether neglected.

The current practice of seeing psychosomatic medicine as the psychological approach to all medical disorders makes it difficult for editors to choose representative topics. Indeed, it is no longer possible to think of a comprehensive textbook. Nonetheless, this book is valuable. It has an admirable introduction and most of the chapters provide authoritative reviews of their subjects. A reviewer can quibble with the choice of some of the topics and the space allocated, but in general, each section provides a useful account with a medical and psychological basis of each disorder.

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