

Book reviews

EDITED BY SIDNEY CROWN and ALAN LEE

The Mistreatment of Elderly People (2nd edn)

Edited by Peter Decalmer & Frank Glendenning. 1997. London: Sage. 278 pp. £45.00 (hb), £15.99 (pb). ISBN 0-76195-262-4 (hb), 0-76195-263-2 (pb)

I remember reading Alex Baker's article 'Granny battering' in *Modern Geriatrics* 23 years ago (1975; August, 20-24). The same Alex Baker who challenged us with a view that admission of older people with dementia to the long-stay hospital wards of mental hospitals of that time represented nothing but 'slow euthanasia'. A clinician with his eyes open and undulled by the routines of everyday commitment and responsibilities.

Fashions have changed. The 1970s saw babies, wives and (naturally) grannies being battered. Children, wives and elders are now, perhaps, more subtly, 'abused or mistreated'. There is no doubt that the phenomenon occurs and has a worldwide distribution. This British discovery has been investigated with the greatest vigour in the gerontology world of the USA, but there are contributions to the literature from many countries. Yet this second edition of a well-received book remains British in its authorship and, for the most part, in its discussion of considerations. This maintains a sense of ownership of the problem; it is part of us, something to be understood, something we should do something about - our dirty washing.

There is a good deal to be learned. The chapters offer an interesting mix of scholarship and personal experience set against emerging attempts to encourage good practice and provide appropriate legislation. Peter Decalmer writes from his experiences as an old age psychiatrist and his case examples reflect this. General practitioners, geriatric physicians and social workers might bring forward a different spectrum, but these suffice to clarify the issues. Not all of us would want to designate such cases as examples of 'elder abuse', there is such a range of complexity in the habits of families and their responses

to illness and other difficulties. Not only families but governments (social policy) and professionals in the 'elder care' industry are exposed to hazards or temptations in their interactions with a vulnerable, dependent minority population. Frank Glendenning's chapter on residential care includes reference to the poignant paper by Tellis-Nayak & Tellis-Nayak (1979; *Gerontologist*, 29, 307-313), still worth reading again and again, and we must humbly reflect that life in such 'homes' is a product of the world outside with its pressures and values magnified. All those caught up in such tragic scenarios are best seen as victims rather than originators of sin.

This is a good book, a bit heavy for a starter. Why not get a quick feel for the subject from Bennett & Lacks' (1988) chapter on 'Elder abuse' in *Principles and Practice of Geriatric Medicine* (ed. M. S. J. Pathy) (Chichester: John Wiley, pp. 193-199). Then move on to this more comprehensive text.

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Pick's Disease and Pick Complex

Edited by Andrew Kertesz & David G. Munoz. 1998. New York: Wiley-Liss. 301 pp. £58.50. ISBN 0-471-17792-X

Larry Hansen has described the nosological debate surrounding a controversial 'entity', dementia with Lewy bodies, as the Tower of Babel. This book is a little like the Babel fish in *The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, a living universal translator making sense of any language. The book is a model of its kind, meeting the nosological issues head on, and the editors make a laudable attempt to bring some clarity to the debate. Their efforts are supported by a degree of scholarship seldom found in a multi-author text. It is particularly pleasing to see a lack of ethnocentricity in the referencing - if the key reference is in

Japanese or French, it is cited. Neither do the contributors conform to the deplorable modern tendency to undervalue everything not published within the past five years. The editors propose that a number of conditions (defined either histologically or clinically) share enough similarities to be termed Pick complex. Some of the conditions included in this are Pick's disease, fronto-temporal dementia, cortico-basal degeneration, semantic dementia, primary progressive aphasia and dementia lacking distinctive histology.

Each of these clinico-pathological syndromes is dealt with in the 19 chapters. The chapters are a mixture of reviews (e.g. Hodges, Garrard and Patterson on 'Semantic dementia' and Knopman on 'Dementias lacking distinctive histology') and detailed discussion of certain aspects of particular syndromes (e.g. LeWitt on the 'Movement disorders of corticobasal degeneration' and Delacourte and colleagues on the 'Biochemistry of the cytoskeleton in Pick complex').

Support for the editors' approach is found in the penultimate chapter by Clark & Wilhelmson who describe the dementias linked to chromosome 17q21-22. Data from 13 families show that this region is implicated in four conditions thought to be within the Pick complex - disinhibition-dementia-Parkinson-amyotrophy complex, familial progressive subcortical gliosis, hereditary dysphasic disinhibition dementia and fronto-temporal dementia - and one which has not previously been included, palido-ponto-nigral degeneration.

This book will probably appeal mostly to specialists in the dementia field but could with benefit be read by those interested in brain disorders and by general psychiatrists. It would be a useful addition to any medical library.

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A Clinician's Guide to the Menopause

Edited by Danna E. Stewart & Gail Robinson. 1997. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press. 243 pp. £38 (hb). ISBN 0-88048-754-2

According to a recent report from the World Bank there are about 500 million

women aged 50 or over in the world and most will live for another 25 years. Health problems associated with the post-menopause have, therefore, increasing importance. This monograph in the 'Clinical Insight' series of the American Psychiatric Association not only addresses mental health in this phase of women's life but also a wide range of other topics, including physiological, psychosocial, cross-cultural, sexual and medical issues. The 12 chapters are mostly written by North American authors.

Although the book aims to provide quick access to this area for mental health professionals in general, it appears too voluminous for this purpose. It is likely to be of most interest to the gynaecologist, to the liaison psychiatrist or the psychiatrist with a special interest in disorders linked with reproductive events. As one of the latter, I found the three chapters on physiology and physical symptoms, on the medical management of the menopause and on hormone replacement therapy most informative, concise and well written. In the interesting chapter on cross-cultural aspects the reader will learn, for example, that Japanese or Mayan women rarely report hot flushes and that one of the possible reasons may be a high dietary intake of plant oestrogen. The contribution on sexual aspects presented a few useful statistical data but the discussion of the management of sexual dysfunction does not tell psychiatrists anything new.

The time around the menopause has in many studies been shown not to be associated with an increased prevalence of psychiatric disorders but with increased psychological distress, largely due to the psychosocial changes women experience in this phase of life. Unfortunately, the contributions on psychiatric, psychological and psychosocial aspects do not deal with the question of what impact such distress may have on, for example, the reporting of somatic menopausal symptoms and treatment-seeking behaviour, and do not offer to general psychiatrists what they would not have already read in other texts.

The monograph would be useful for a departmental library but, if the budget is limited, not of a high priority.

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Stress Response Syndromes: PTSD, Grief and Adjustment Disorders (3rd edn)

By Mardi Jon Horowitz. 1997. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson. 384 pp. US\$40.00 (hb). ISBN 0-7657-0025-5

This is the third edition of a book first published in 1978 that has earned for itself the place of standard text for those working with victims of trauma. As a somewhat selectively updated new edition it is strong in its account of the early field studies on the impact of life events and some of the early experimental work that led to the inclusion of post-traumatic stress disorder in DSM-III in 1980. However, it is much weaker in providing a synthesis of the vast amount of recent research that has been published on the subject; for example, there is very little on assessment instruments or the problem of comorbidity; nothing on eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing and no mention of any of the issues raging around the false memory debate. An omission that is acknowledged by the author is the lack of updating on the biological substrate of trauma.

It is, however, a scholarly and compassionate examination predominantly of the psychodynamics that underlie the ways in which exposure to trauma such as rape, sudden bereavement or injury impacts upon individuals. The significance of the defensive configurations of denial and intrusive repetition for individuals is well described as is the tension that exists between avoidance and what Horowitz calls "the completion tendency". This edition includes an update of diagnostic criteria and a new chapter on mourning and re-schematisation.

The book is divided into four sections: part one covers the different stress response syndromes; part two describes an integrated theory of their psychogenesis using a synthesis of psychoanalytic and cognitive models and includes a chapter on treatment; part three illustrates the importance of pre-morbid personality with chapters on histrionic, obsessional and narcissistic personalities (although none is a borderline personality, most of whom have been traumatised). The final quarter is given over to clinical examples of therapy sessions.

Overall, a slightly half-hearted new edition that requires additional reading in order for the clinician to gain a comprehensive overview of the subject. It remains strong in its descriptions of the psychodynamic understanding of the victims of

trauma and is well illustrated with case histories. Omissions notwithstanding it has the advantage of being clearly written and is half the size of Meichenbaum's rather cumbersome, cognitive-behavioural, *Treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*.

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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Acute and Long-Term Responses to Trauma and Disaster

Edited by Carol S. Fullerton & Robert J. Ursano. 1997. London: American Psychiatric Press. 296 pp. £33.50. ISBN 0-88048-751-8

The origin of this material comes from a number of symposia presented at the Annual American Psychiatric Association meeting. This is relevant because it explains what otherwise appears to be a rather mixed grouping of subjects within the broad post-traumatic stress disorder theme. Many of the chapters have the appearance of research papers focusing on single studies, or summarising a number of studies of the same population. These will be of interest to those who wish to learn more about these research data. However, in general it is probably better for material of this sort to be published in journal format having been submitted to the peer review process.

The editors of this collection of papers are internationally recognised workers in post-traumatic stress disorder and have provided short chapters introducing and closing the book. These are brief overview chapters which put the papers into context. These editorial chapters do not contain references later than 1995 and although the book was published in 1997, the year of the APA Annual Meeting is not specified. The impression given is that it may have been some time before 1995. The two best chapters are review chapters by Arieh Shalev and by Southwick, Yehuda and Charney. These deal with models of the pathophysiology and neurobiology of post-traumatic stress disorder. Even in these chapters, however, I could not find evidence of publications cited after 1995.

My impression is that this is a collection of papers, which are no longer the most definitive sources of material on their