

hypothesis is advanced that autism may be a disorder of memory. Interesting comparisons are made between various dementias causing particular memory deficits and some of the features of autism.

The book is essential reading for those who wish to carry out research, or to investigate clinically, the 'neurobiological' aspects of autism. The introduction and overview, as well as the epilogue, are a tribute to good editing. There is a useful general index, but unfortunately no author index. This book should be available in medical libraries to psychiatrists in training. The cost is a little excessive for a paperback of this size.

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Textbook of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2nd edition)

Edited by Jerry Wiener. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press. 940 pp. £115 (hb)

This substantial textbook is published under the auspices of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Despite a standard disclaimer that their books represent the views and opinions of the individual authors, it is the only child and adolescent psychiatric textbook they publish, thus it inevitably presents itself as the officially approved textbook. Without ever even inferentially laying claim to this status, Rutter, Taylor and Hersov is the equivalent publication in the UK. As most British individuals and institutions considering purchasing this textbook would first consider this UK gold-standard it seems reasonable to directly compare the two.

Rutter *et al*'s book has more of almost everything: approximately 1.2 million words with only 53% as many in Wiener; 20% more citations (though this quantitatively does not reflect the vastly greater quantity of discussion of research-based information in the UK textbook; and 24 chapter topics not covered in Wiener compared with seven in Wiener's publication. Wiener's textbook is exclusively written by US-based authors, whereas Rutter's is written mostly by UK authors but 20% of

the contributions hail from the USA, with one each from New Zealand and Switzerland as well. The paperback version costs £55 as compared with £115 for the Wiener hardback textbook.

However, Wiener's textbook does have a number of advantages. In general it has short, readable, well-summarised and organised chapters. More specifically, it has a chapter on normal development including an interesting section summarising developmental theories of memory acquisition. A table and check-list for the 'clinical assessment in infancy and early childhood' is particularly interesting in its clinical scheme for evaluating emotional psychopathological development. There are whole chapters covering pre-adolescent depression, hypnosis and another on obesity in infancy and childhood. It is published more recently (1997 cf. 1994), though with its relative lack of research-based discussions the main advantage of this is lost. The book has four chapters on conduct and oppositional disorders compared with one in Rutter's. No doubt this reflects the fact that conduct disorder is the largest diagnostic group referred to out-patient clinics in the USA. These chapters somewhat disquietingly reflect the medicalisation of the condition in the USA and clinicians' inclination to medicate these patients.

On the down side there are substantial areas of clinical and research enquiry that are not even mentioned, deficits in attention, motor control and perception (DAMP), and the developmental continuities between attention deficit disorder and conduct disorder being two clear examples. There are no chapters relating to the two main professional agencies psychiatrists work with, education and social work. Liaison is not even indexed; there is no mention of in-patient treatment; and surprisingly there is no separate consideration of attachment disorders. Behavioural phenotypes do not rate a mention, and there is little coverage of Axis 2 disorders. Rutter's eight chapters on the main influences on psychopathology are matched by only two in Wiener. Transatlantic perspectives and practice in this speciality vary considerably, making the text less relevant to many UK readers.

On balance my own conclusion would be that individuals and institutions who would prefer a more summarised, less research-based textbook of child and adolescent psychiatry would find Wiener's textbook adequate. It certainly covers the

subject in enough detail for either the MRCPsych or the Paediatric Membership examination.

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Developments in Infant Observation

Edited by Susan Reid. London: Routledge. 1997. 232 pp. £15.99 (pb). ISBN 0-415149-41-X

I found *Developments in Infant Observation* enjoyable and interesting and I now feel better informed about the process of infant observation.

The book is divided into three sections – practice, theoretical developments and research developments. Although there are 11 chapters, all by different authors, the book has good continuity. Each section contains an introduction, giving an overview of the papers and any links between them. This helps maintain coherence. It also helps that all the papers contain detailed records of actual infant observations.

I found some of the chapters especially interesting. For instance, Magagna explores the role of the nanny in the 'practice' section. She considers the interaction between mother and nanny and its impact on the infant, and gives moving examples. One mother was unable to bear the infant's attachment to nanny, and mother and nanny seemed to be in competition, wanting to be 'the only one' for the baby. In another observation, a supportive nanny helped a mother develop confidence in her capacity to love and nurture her disabled child.

The largest section, on theory, was the most difficult to digest. As it was not always clear how a particular theoretical construct was derived from the observation material.

The final two chapters consider the research potential of infant observation and the difficulties of such research. Reid suggests it can be complementary to the more experimental and laboratory-based research into infant development, for