

Roth who, in a magisterial overview, links historical developments with current major research themes.

All the chapters in the book are of a uniformly high standard and act as excellent summaries and reference sources. The book was published in 1988 but with few exceptions the chapters remain up to date. A more recent review of biological treatments would probably reduce the almost exclusive emphasis on benzodiazepines in favour of tricyclic antidepressants, and drugs acting on serotonin pathways. Equally, there have been interesting developments in the study of basic benzodiazepine mechanisms including, for example, the identification of an 'endogenous' benzodiazepine in both human brain and, in a dramatic synthesis of biological and dynamic approaches, the milk of nursing mothers.

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Handbook of Anxiety, Vol 2: Classification, Etiological Factors and Associated Disturbances. Edited by R. NOYES JR, SIR MARTIN ROTH and GRAHAM D. BURROWS. Amsterdam: Elsevier. 1988. 560 pp. £115.00.

This is the second volume in the series referred to in Dr Cowen's review. Its title indicates that it covers a broad and rather diverse subject matter – classification, aetiology, and associated disturbances. The actual content is even broader than this, with chapters on the measurement of anxiety, specific clinical syndromes, and on special features of anxiety in adolescence and old age. It is a diverse collection of topics but the editors have succeeded in drawing them together so that the book does have a reasonable unity of purpose.

That the editors have assembled a strong team, can be seen from the following (incomplete) list of authors and subjects: Roth, Noyes, and Marks each writing on an aspect of classification; Cloninger on theories of emotion, Parker on developmental factors in aetiology and Andrews on life events; Kellner on anxiety and bodily complaints, Creed on anxiety in general medical patients, and Coryell on the mortality of anxiety disorders; Beumont on anxiety and eating disorders, Liebowitz & Gorman on social phobia, and Burrows & Judd on simple phobia.

These authors and the others have produced comprehensive reviews of the published work on their subjects so that the book is a valuable source of reference up to the year of publication (which was 1988 although it has only now reached this reviewer). Some of these reviews are particularly useful in drawing together papers scattered in journals that are not seen regularly by readers whose prime interests are in anxiety; for example, the chapter on anxiety and disordered sleep by Vela-Bueno

et al. Little has been left out although it would have been useful to include a chapter on anxiety in children to supplement that on anxiety in adolescents.

Although these comprehensive reviews seem to be directed mainly to research workers, many are concerned with problems of everyday clinical practice: the relationship between anxiety and depressive disorders; anxiety disorders with mainly physical symptoms; the aetiological role of recent life events and of previous experience; and the association between anxiety and alcohol abuse. Readers will not find direct advice about clinical practice – that is not the purpose of the book – but they will understand more clearly what is known and what still needs to be discovered about these everyday important problems.

In common with other handbooks from this publisher, the present volume is lavishly produced with a handsome binding and high quality paper. Presumably this accounts for the extremely high price which is likely to restrict the book to the libraries of the larger academic centres. This is a pity because, as noted above, there is much here to interest clinicians as well as research workers.

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Coping with Crisis. By GLENYS PARRY. London: BPS Books/Routledge. 1990. 119 pp. £5.99.

At one time or another whatever caring profession we belong to we have to deal with other people's crises and indeed our own. In this book Parry shares with us the wealth of her many years experience working in the field of stressful life-events and as a psychotherapist. She explains what constitutes a crisis, how people respond and how to understand a complex crisis. She then goes on to look at how people cope with crisis, helping and being helped and crisis management, and the final chapter examines life after a crisis.

The book is clearly written and presented, and each section is illustrated through case material and numerous exercises are provided. So why should anyone read this book? Well, whatever our level of training and experience, when it comes to the crunch – particularly in relation to major disasters – we are not as prepared as we like to think we are. This book can equally be read by our clients as it avoids jargon and gives a basic understanding of crisis and enables them to relate this to their own experience. It is very unusual to be given a book for review about which you can say "everyone should read this".

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