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Bipolar II Disorder – Modelling, Measuring and Managing. Edited by Gordon Parker. (Pp. 304; £60.00; ISBN-13: 9780521873147 hb.) Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. 2008.

I got delayed in reading Gordon Parker's book on bipolar II by Melvyn Bragg's *Remember Me*, a novel based on his relationship with his first wife. This woman is an artist who has at least two periods of depression culminating in her suicide as the marriage relationship breaks down in the maelstrom of the 1960s social change. As you might expect her depression is combined with personal attractiveness, creative talent and periods of high productivity. She undergoes a long period of psychoanalytical treatment in the 1960s and even insists that her husband does the same.

She never enters the asylum system which was still going strong in the 1960s and in which Kraepelin's manic depressive insanity was born a century before. The extreme form that Kraepelin described was re-branded in the 1960s as bipolar disorder and has been the subject of a substantial body of research. However, the illness described by Bragg has attracted much less interest and study until recently. Parker sets out in his book to summarize and extend our knowledge of this illness which has come to be called bipolar II.

How do you write a book about a disorder that is ill defined and little researched? You could just outline the depth of ignorance and point out potentially useful paths but Parker has instead given readers the benefit of experience combined with what evidence is available. The book begins with chapters by a dozen authors that review the evidence, often by extrapolation from bipolar I data. The conclusions are generally that the data is very limited and that even the limits that define the disorder are unclear. But the more unique parts are the chapters that follow which consist of Parker's views and research about both defining and treating the condition.

He is not afraid to let his clinical experience guide him, for example in the use of antidepressants in bipolar II. Rather than just push forward his view on this (and other approaches) he seeks criticism and sets out the ways that he has tried to define and research the problem. He has not just sought the view of one friendly critic but gathered a dozen to express their disparate views on his approach.

If you are looking for a book that gives you the way to understand and treat bipolar II then Dr Parker's regimen may well be what you are looking for. His

approach is described in detail and accompanied by advice from his clinical colleagues on broader psychological and lifestyle approaches. However, it is likely that most specialists reading this book will value more the exposure to a range of diverse ideas, some of which are plainly contradictory.

It is possible there is one approach that is right to help those with bipolar II disorder and that systematic research will reveal it. However, the research on bipolar I seems to be telling us that each individual treatment can be beneficial but for a small (and different) proportion of the patient group. This may also be why combinations are often proving more effective than monotherapies in medication trials. We are still hopeful that differentiating between patients and defining subgroups could prove very useful. Whether defining groups around the features of mania and hypomania is the best route has yet to be proven.

The tragic suicide at the end of *Remember Me* appears to stem from the breakdown of the marriage but the way that her analytical treatment proceeds and the abrupt end is clearly important. The quality and experience of the people giving advice and care to those with bipolar II is a vital issue, particularly at this time when a nice recipe book is not available. Dr Parker clearly demonstrates that he is in touch with this vital issue.

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The Handbook of Clinical Adult Psychology, Third Edition. Edited by S. Lindsay and G. Powell. (Pp. 906; £32.99; ISBN 9781583918661.) Routledge. 2007.

This book is the most recent edition of a successful key clinical psychology reference text. The editors state that the Third Edition has been updated to take account of recent research that has taken place since the previous edition, which was published in 1994. This claim is undeniable, with each chapter being written by leading experts in the field and containing up-to-date research on both assessment and intervention techniques for a range of mental health problems, as well as reference to clinical issues facing the profession.

The book is separated into 41 chapters covering 17 different 'disorders' and clinical problems, including psychosis, bipolar disorder, disorders of sleep, relationship problems, and chronic pain; as well as anxiety disorders and depression, for which psychological interventions were originally developed. As in previous editions, each clinical problem is allocated

two chapters: one which outlines approaches to investigation and assessment, including reference to appropriate assessment measures; and another which outlines current evidence in relation to best practice treatment, including case examples and models for formulation. This makes the handbook extremely accessible and easy to use, as well as reinforcing the importance of assessment in formulation and treatment. The book has a large emphasis on CBT interventions, with the majority of evidence for treatment approaches being drawn from the findings of recent randomized controlled trial studies. However, other psychotherapeutic approaches are referred to, as well as non-psychological interventions such as psychopharmacology. Modern approaches are also discussed, such as the computerized delivery of CBT in anxiety disorders.

The most notable differences from the previous edition of this handbook are the addition of chapters specifically devoted to bipolar disorder (authored by Dominic Lam and Warren Mansell), post-traumatic stress disorder (authored by Nick Grey), and personality disorder (authored by Peter Hayward and Julian Walker). In addition, the section on anxiety disorders has been separated into chapters on social phobia (authored by Freda McManus and Colette Hirsch) and panic (authored by Stan Lindsay). Moreover, the section on schizophrenia has been replaced with a more inclusive section on the assessment and treatment of psychosis (authored by Elizabeth Kuipers, Emmanuelle Peters, Louise Johns, and Yvonne Linney). These changes are perhaps reflective of the progress that has been made since the 1990s in terms of the development of specific psychological interventions for a range of clinical problems.

In addition to the above, several sections of the handbook are devoted to areas of clinical psychology other than the direct treatment of mental health problems. These include chapters on clinical health psychology, and the provision of psychological evidence in court. Two chapters also focus on the use of single-case methodology in evaluating psychological interventions. Chapter 41 on 'Professional issues in the new century' by Catherine Dooley is particularly interesting, documenting the continuing evolution of clinical psychology as a profession since her previous chapter on professional issues in the Second Edition of the handbook. Dooley considers the impact of public issues and government policy on the changing role of clinical psychology over the last 10 years, as well as implications for the future in terms of the skill base required from psychologists, from both a clinical and research perspective.

As a researcher, I feel that this handbook provides a comprehensive and thoroughly up-to-date overview

of assessment techniques, interventions, and professional issues in the field of clinical adult psychology, organized into accessible sections written by experts. The use of tables, diagrams, and figures also further improve accessibility and provide useful resources. I can imagine that it will provide an initial 'port of call' for many clinical psychology trainees and, as with previous editions, I am sure it will feature on the bookshelves of many students, researchers, and mental health practitioners alike.

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Stahl's Essential Psychopharmacology: Neuroscientific Basis and Practical Applications, Third Edition. By S. M. Stahl. (Pp. 1096; \$85.00; ISBN 978-0-521-6736-1 pb.) Cambridge University Press: New York. 2008.

This third edition of Stahl's *Essential Psychopharmacology* is greatly expanded from the second edition. In this comprehensive single-author text, Dr Stephen Stahl elucidates and expands the understanding of current neuroscience developments, which represent a paradigm shift in our understanding of brain function, neuronal mechanisms, and neurocircuits.

Chapter 1 presents the unique structures of neurons and their specialized functions. Chapter 2 highlights the anatomy of synaptic transmission and how neurons evolve and form synapses. The next chapter describes the chemical aspects of brain and nervous system communication and the molecular basis of neurotransmission. Chapters 4 and 5 delineate the new neuroscience, which underlies our current understanding of psychopharmacological drug action.

In Chapter 6, Dr Stahl describes how genes exercise a role in causing subtle molecular abnormalities that create increased risk of mental illness under specific environmental strain. Environmental stress may interact with the subtle abnormalities associated with complex genetic risk to produce a behavioral syndrome, consistent with psychiatric illness.

Chapter 7 leads the reader to an increased comprehension of relevant neurocircuits, which are critically important in regulating mood and emotions and in organizing thoughts. Chapter 8 depicts how psychiatric symptoms and syndromes may be linked to alterations in neuronal circuits.

The subsequent chapters in this impressive text address most of the syndromes in psychiatry and the role of medication action and treatment. Chapter 9 focuses on the syndrome of psychosis including new