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I thought it unfortunate that the differential diagnoses followed the hierarchical ordering of ICD-10 with organic causes being listed first. While in some respects this is logical in other ways it is not so. The reason relates to the old adage that "if I see a bird flying past my window it is more likely to be a sparrow than a canary". clearly in terms of organic disorders, hypothalamic tumour is a possible differential diagnosis for mania. However, substance misuse is much more common as a cause of manic symptomatology. There was also one 'howler': phaeochromocytomatosis is given as the first differential diagnosis of panic symptoms, even before thyrotoxicosis! Examiners would not be impressed by such ordering.

In spite of these reservations, used in conjunction with other teaching methods and in short segments, the videos provide a good adjunct to the teaching of basic psychiatry.

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The Treatment of Drinking Problems. A Guide for the Helping Professionals

G. Edwards, E. J. Marshall and C. C. H. Cook. Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press. 1997. 368 pp. £23.95. ISBN 0-521-49792-0

When I was introduced to the first edition of this book I was enthralled. Here was a bestseller of the addictions world which combined good readable English with evidence-based medicine and sound clinical judgement. When I came to read this third edition I assumed it would be as good, so I took it on holiday, something clinicians are warned against, but the risk was worth it and I was not disappointed.

For this new edition the first author has been joined by two others. This enhances the book by giving it a broader creative base from two well-respected figures. The volume is divided into two parts, the first of which covers basic areas which give a background understanding of alcohol problems, while the second part gives a thoroughly practical account of clinical relevance to screening, assessment and treatment. There is an introductory guide which sets forth the aims of the authors and would allow easy access by a reader to those areas of immediate interest at any time when dipping into the book.

As might be expected, where statements are made, references are quoted to back up the opinions expressed. This means it can function as a very useful starting point for pursuing an area of interest. Appropriate references are quoted from the past (with Trotter, 1804, being the oldest I could see) while incorporating up to date literature as well.

Unfortunately, Project MATCH was published just too late to be included though there is information on the use of new drugs such as acamprosate and naltrexone.

I am probably being too critical to cavil that a section is included on "transient hallucinatory experience" without anything other than opinion to back it up. There is no discussion in relationship to DSM-IV or ICD-10 about this suggestion. Similarly, a statement is made that alcoholic hepatitis "almost always progresses to cirrhosis in women, even following abstinence". That has not been my invariable experience and I would have liked a reference to support this. However, to find only two criticisms compared with such a luxurious wealth of fact, common sense and treatment optimism – while being a good read into the bargain makes me feel churlish. All psychiatrists who treat patients with alcohol problems should obtain a copy and they will find that it will repay itself as a reference book. Libraries in psychiatric hospitals must have at least one copy for those preparing for examinations.

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miscellany

FOCUS, the child and adolescent mental health project at the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Research Unit, has produced an internet guide for child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) professionals. This resource contains two sections: the first is a

comprehensive 'how to' guide to the internet and the second lists sites of interest to people working in CAMHS. The resource is available free of charge to members of the FOCUS network. Further information: Catherine Ayres, The Royal College of Psychiatrists' Research Unit

(tel: 020 7235 2351 ext. 256; e-mail: catherine.ayres@virgin.net).

Professor Hugh Freeman has been awarded the 650th Anniversary Medal of Merit of the Charles University of Prague.

forthcoming events

The Forum on Learning Disability, The Royal Society of Medicine Press are holding two one-day meetings:

Behavioural Phenotypes: Academic and Clinical Update, which takes place on 11 May 2000 and **Therapy in Schools: Problems, Policies and Good Practice**, which takes place on 4 July 2000. The venue for both meetings is The Royal Society of Medicine Press, London. Further information: Emma Chaffin, The Royal Society of Medicine Press, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AE (tel: 020 7290 3934).

The Clinical Governance Support Service at the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Research Unit is organising a series of symposia focusing on key issues in

mental health and their relation to clinical governance. These include: **The National Service Framework for Mental Health in the Context of Clinical Governance**, on 16 May 2000; **Learning Disability Services in Relation to Clinical Governance**, on 19 June 2000 (both in London); and **Risk Management and Clinical Governance** on 26 September 2000 (Macclesfield). Further information: Sam Coombs, Communications Officer, The Royal College of Psychiatrists' Research Unit (tel: 020 7235 2351 ext. 234).

The Portman Clinic is recruiting for its **Diploma in Forensic Psychotherapeutic Studies** course. The course is aimed at professionals working in the NHS

secure units, prisons, probation offices, the courts and the community, and aims to increase understanding of the psychodynamic considerations underlying offending behaviour in a criminal context. Further information: The Portman Clinic, 8 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3 5NA (tel: 020 7794 8262; e-mail: portman@taviport.org).

Turning Policy into Practice Seminars: Integrated Care Pathways as a Quality Initiative is the title of a one-day seminar for managers and practitioners organised by the Centre for Mental Health Services Development (CMHSD), King's College London, being held in Taunton on 23 May 2000. This workshop aims to provide an introduction



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to pathways, with some 'live' examples, while enabling users and clinicians to begin to discuss the care which they deliver and receive. King's College London Community Care Development Centre (CCDC) are also the organisers of **The 2000 CCDC Annual Learning Disabilities Congress**, which takes place in Birmingham on 14–15 June 2000. The main themes of the congress will be: social inclusion; partnerships with self-advocates and families; organisational change and development; and service change and development. Further information on both events: Geoff Hodgson, Director of Events, King's College London, Second Floor, Friars House, 157–168 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8EZ (tel: 020 7928 4994; fax: 020 7928 4101).

The British Society of Medical and Dental Hypnosis (Metropolitan and South) is organising a two-day course/workshop on **The Uses of Hypnosis in General Practice and Hypnosis in Children**. The course will be held at The Royal Society of Medicine on 3–4 June 2000. Further information: Mrs Anne Valentine, 23 Broadfields Heights, 53–59 Broadfields Avenue, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 8PF (tel: 020 8905 4342; fax: 020 8958 8069).

Mole Conferences are the organisers of **Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy: Fact or Fiction?** A one-day seminar being held in central London on 12 June 2000. The seminar is part of a series of multidisciplinary seminars for all mental health

professionals and those in allied professions, especially accident and emergency departments, general practitioners, paediatricians, child psychiatrists and family lawyers. This particular seminar aims to raise awareness of current issues in the assessment and treatment of Munchausen's syndrome by proxy and related diagnoses. Further information: Mole Conferences, 26 Church Road, Portslade, Brighton BN41 1LA (tel: 01273 242634; fax: 01273 235095; e-mail: enquiries@mole-conferences.com).

The North London Centre for Group Therapy would like to announce: **Inside and Outside your Group**, a group analytic weekend workshop taking place at the North London Centre for Group Therapy on 30 June–2 July 2000. Further information: Lesley Holmes, North London Centre for Group Therapy, 138 Bramley Road, Oakwood, London N14 4HU (tel: 020 8440 1451; fax: 020 8449 3847; e-mail: NLCent@aol.com).

The Royal College of Psychiatrists' Conference Unit would like to announce the following events: **Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Advanced Continued Professional Development Institute** (21 September 2000, The King's Fund, London); **Fitness to Drive** (12 October 2000, Society of Chemical Industry, 15 Belgrave Square, London); and **Informatics One-Day Meeting** (17 November 2000, The King's Fund, London). Further information: The Royal College of Psychiatrists' Conference Office (tel: 020 7235 2351 ext. 168).

The Professional Education & Training Unit (PET), University of Southampton are the organisers of the following events: **Psychosis and Spirituality**, to be held on 7–8 September 2000 at Regent's College, London; **Section 12(2) Mental Health Act 1983 Refresher Day**, to take place in Portsmouth on 1–2 November 2000; and **Sex Offenders**, scheduled for 10 November 2000. Details of the programmes and further information about the events: Mr David K. Beck, PET Unit Director, Mental Health Group, University of Southampton, Royal South Hants Hospital, Southampton SO14 0YG (web site: <http://groups.medschool.soton.ac.uk/mentalhealth/>).

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust Training Programme commences in October 2000. The following courses are available: **Foundation Course in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy**: an introduction to the theory and practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, providing a new way of thinking about clinical work. **Seminars on Working with People in Later Life: A Psychoanalytic Perspective**: this series of seminars aims to provide a forum in which individual, group or organisational work in the area of later life can be thought about from a psychoanalytic point of view. Further information: Academic Services, Tavistock Centre, 120 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5BA (tel: 020 7447 3722).