

## Book Reviews

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*Gender and Medicine in Ireland, 1700–1950*. Edited by Margaret H. Preston and Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh (344pp.; ISBN: 978-0-8156-3271-9). Syracuse University Press: Syracuse, New York, 2012.

This collection of essays explores themes of gender, medicine, history and politics in Ireland between 1700 and 1950. A broad variety of topics are covered, ranging from James Kelly's exploration of 'dental medical practice in eighteenth-century Ireland' to Susannah Riordan's essay on 'the limitations of venereal disease policy, 1943–1951', from Greta Jones's consideration of 'women and tuberculosis in Ireland' to Sandra McAvoy's chapter on 'women, fertility control, the Irish State, and the 1935 ban on contraceptives'.

This diversity of topics is greatly to be welcomed: the themes of gender and medicine are complex and important, necessitating broad-based considerations that often cut across the histories of gender, medicine and broader Irish society. This collection succeeds admirably in reflecting the intrinsically cross-disciplinary nature of the subject at hand.

From the perspective of psychiatry, there is much to enjoy here. There is, for example, a fascinating essay on the 'therapeutic philosophy at the Connaught District Lunatic Asylum' written by Oonagh Walsh, professor at Glasgow Caledonian University and author of *Anglican Women in Dublin: Philanthropy, Politics and Education in the Early Twentieth Century* (2005). Professor Walsh's contribution highlights several important themes relating to asylum practices in 19th century Ireland and pays welcome attention to the role of nurses, who are often somewhat ignored in histories of this period.

It is especially interesting to read Professor Walsh's accounts of treatment in the Ballinasloe asylum, and her observation that 'the efforts made to restore the mentally ill came down largely to a modified form of moral therapy, especially in relation to cheerful and constant occupation' (p. 85). She notes that efforts to engage patients in activities such as sports and games was 'a way of persuading patients back into a social world from which they had been cast, involuntarily or otherwise, and of creating a bridge between the secluded world of the institution and the world beyond its walls' (p. 85). Overall, it is apparent that St Brigid's in Ballinasloe was an extremely interesting institution for any number of reasons, and Professor Walsh's forthcoming monograph, *The Connaught District Lunatic Asylum: Land, Power and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, is greatly to be anticipated.

From a psychiatry point of view, this book also contains fascinating contributions from Pauline Prior on 'gender and criminal lunacy in nineteenth-century Ireland' and Elizabeth Malcolm on 'inebriate women and reformatories in Ireland, 1899–1919'. From a broader social perspective, there is an excellent chapter on 'Lady Dudley's District Nursing Scheme and the Congested Districts Board, 1903–1923' written by Ciara Breathnach, who lectures in history at the University of Limerick and whose previous publications include *A History of the Congested Districts Board of Ireland, 1891–1923: Poverty and Development in the West of Ireland* (2005). Chapters such as hers place the themes of gender and medicine in their proper social settings, contextualising and deepening considerations of more specific topics relating to these themes.

The editors of this volume, Margaret H. Preston and Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh, are very well placed to assemble a collection such as this. Margaret H. Preston is an associate professor in the Department of History at Augustana College in South Dakota, and author of *Charitable Words: Women, Philanthropy, and the Language of Charity in Nineteenth-Century Dublin* and *A Journey of Faith, a Destination of Excellence: Avera McKennan Hospital's First Century of Caring*. Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh is a visiting scholar at Harvard University and a fellow of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland. Her books include *Quiet Revolutionaries: Irish Women in Education, Medicine and Sport, 1861–1964* and the especially fascinating *Kathleen Lynn: Irishwoman, Patriot, Doctor*.

Overall, this volume provides a rounded and considered view of the role of gender in the history of Irish medicine. It's considerations of psychiatry are engaging, insightful and well worth reading. The book as a whole benefits from its excellent thematic focus, careful author selection, judicious editing and plenty of high-level scholarship.

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*Harm Reduction in Substance Use and High Risk Behaviour: International Policy and Practice*. Richard Pates and Diane Riley (472.; ISBN: 978-1-4051-8297-3). Blackwell Publishing Ltd: UK, 2012.

Harm reduction in substance misuse is a well-established practice in USA, Australia and most

western European countries like Ireland and United Kingdom. However, it is not practiced in many countries across the world due to social and cultural beliefs and due to political reasons and public opinion. This book gives an excellent overview of the practice of harm reduction in substance misuse across different countries of the world with respect to existing policies in various countries. The various sections of the book have been contributed by experts from a number of countries across the world like Argentina, USA, United Kingdom, Australia, Morocco, Canada and South Africa which has added to the value of this book.

The initial section of the book gives an insight in to the history of harm reduction followed by the second section, which focuses on policy. The chapter on 'A history of harm reduction advocacy' discusses extensively the reasons for resistance in implementing harm reduction policies in most developing and transitional countries and indicate the myths held by those against harm reduction. The emphasis is on British policies in the chapter on harm reduction and police services. However in this chapter, the authors have discussed the contentious issue of drug consumption rooms and the existences of around 90 such centres across different countries and the support to establish such services in United Kingdom from certain sections of the police department. Many readers would not find it acceptable the discussion in the chapter on international security and the global war on drugs as it calls for alternatives to failed global war on drugs. This appears to include legalisation of drugs in order to reduce organised crime and decriminalise drug users.

The chapter on harm reduction in prisons also discusses the risk of HIV, Hepatitis B and C transmission due to injectable drug misuse and reminds us of the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights published in 1997. The authors also discuss the risk behaviours in prisons including sexual activity with data available from different countries and analyse the needle and syringe programmes and the availability of opioid substitution therapy across prisons.

The third section discusses extensively about harm minimisation in gambling and tobacco, which are often excluded when discussing about substance misuse issues. In the chapter on harm reduction in stimulants, there is emphasis on the need to target certain occupations who use stimulants such as truck drivers and the authors have also discussed the controversial issue of 'crack kits' which is used in some countries as a cocaine harm reduction strategy. This book does not fail to discuss the epidemic in the recent years of 'designer or head shop drugs' and the presence of substances such as mephedrone in ecstasy tablets. In addition, the authors call for a peer led harm reduction

approach to stimulant misuse and the need for random 'pill testing' in club scenes to analyse the content of stimulant pills.

The final section deals with specific regions across the world with a separate chapter on ex-communist countries in central and eastern Europe. The authors describe the uniqueness of the problem in every country like fentanyl being the main injecting drug in Estonia and increased prevalence of amphetamine misuse along with heroin in Latvia and Lithuania and fast growing HIV epidemic in Ukraine.

The chapter on harm reduction in western Europe is interesting in that it discusses the effectiveness of decriminalisation of drugs in Portugal along with the dual track approach in Finland and the heroin prescribing project in Switzerland. It is hard to ignore the absence of discussion on Irish harm reduction policies in most chapters of this book including the chapter discussing harm reduction in western Europe. There are very few instances on the Health Research Board data being quoted in this book and also the absence of Irish contributors in this book is disappointing. Overall this book is a very good read for those interested in addiction issues and could be used as an excellent reference book for future policy making in harm reduction.

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*Psychiatry of Intellectual Disability. A Practical Manual.*  
Edited by Julie P. Gentile and Paulette Marie Gillig  
(392pp.; ISBN-10:1119993814, ISBN-13: 978-1119993810).  
John Wiley & Sons Ltd: UK, 2012.

As a consultant working in Intellectual Disability Psychiatry in Ireland, I have received most of my clinical information sources from the British Isles and Europe. I was therefore very pleased to review this book, in my area of interest, originating from the United States. It was written as a collaborative project by 13 professionals, who are mainly psychiatrists, with the majority being affiliated with Wright State University in Ohio. Dr Gentile and Dr Gillig edited the book. Dr Gentile is the Professor of Dual Diagnosis for the Ohio Department of Mental Health, among many other accolades, and also has extensive clinical, research and academic experience in the field of