

psychological, pharmacological, and sociological aspects in a comprehensive and enlightening manner. Physiological factors involve genetics; the effects of different dosage and different beverages on the individual.

Psychological studies look at alcohol in relation to stress, dependency and power, and consider whether alcohol and crime may be caused by the same factors; for example early affectional deprivation. Pharmacological causes may be lack of REM sleep, nutritional factors such as hypoglycaemia, and the well known disinhibiting effects of the drug on the brain, with cognitive dysfunction, and a tendency to more concrete thought processes.

Sociological studies are most interesting dealing with the positive, negative or ambivalent, but always strong, attitudes of society to drink, the effects of drinking norms, cultural factors and expectations of individual societies giving the propensity for each population to commit crimes whilst under the influence.

This should prove a useful book for researchers of many disciplines and may be an enlightening experience for anyone involved in work with criminals and alcoholics. It is probably the most comprehensive on this fascinating subject to date, although a similar British equivalent might be of even more interest in this country.

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Perspectives in Alcohol and Drug Abuse: Similarities and Differences. Edited by JOEL SOLOMON and KIM A. KEELEY. Bristol: John Wright. 1982. Pp 259. £13.25.

The rigid compartmentalization relating to drug and alcohol abuse in the United Kingdom can be noted at meetings of psychiatrists. Often, those responsible for alcohol and drug abuse treatment appear different not only in philosophy but in appearance. The Dependence Addiction Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, is an attempt to reduce this within the College.

The above volume, from an American viewpoint, examines similarities and differences in the fields of alcohol and drug abuse from a variety of aspects. These include history of usage, the influence of socio/cultural factors, biochemical similarities and differences, and possibly languages, (e.g. the amino-isoquinoline hypothesis), examination of personality structure in users, frequency of cross usage, drug/alcohol interaction, problems and benefits of combined treatments, prevention strategies, research options including (developmental background, personality and genetic aetiological factors) and

United State's law relating to alcohol and drug use, emphasising the treatment/punishment dichotomy. It is readable and of an even standard, and important, in that, it makes us examine the situation in the United Kingdom. Whilst the American experience (and it seems written primarily for an American audience) cannot be automatically transferred here (e.g. the age gap between alcohol and drug abusers, though shrinking here, is still considerable), it is time we at least looked at these similarities and differences in alcohol and drug abuse in the United Kingdom.

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Dangerousness: Psychiatric Assessment and Management. Edited by JOHN R. HAMILTON and HUGH FREEMAN. Gaskell (The Royal College of Psychiatrists). Ashford, Kent: Headley Brothers. 1982. Pp 121. £4.75 (plus 50p packing and postage).

Few psychiatrists feel they can accurately predict dangerous or violent behaviour in their patients. Indeed, much greater accuracy would be achieved by predicting all patients as non-violent. Some, however, are dangerous and how best to treat and manage those is a question fraught with uncertainty. The temptation is to err on the side of safety and detain many inoffensive individuals. The question of dangerousness and its management therefore is rife with discussion and debate relevant not only to psychiatrists but to penologists, sociologists and legislators.

This book—a collection of papers presented at a symposium organized by Dr J. R. Hamilton for Broadmoor Hospital in 1979—makes a substantial contribution to this debate. The authors include experienced forensic psychiatrists, social workers, members of the legal profession and Home Office personnel. Unlike ancient Gaul the book is divided into four parts, the first is concerned with semantic, ethical and political aspects of dangerousness, the second with the clinical aspects, the third deals with experience of staff at Broadmoor and the final part addresses problems of management and administration. There are a total of twenty papers most have a reference list and some are followed by comment and discussion. Papers of particular reference to the psychiatrist are those on assessing dangerousness in psychopaths, the mentally subnormal, psychotic patients, sex offenders and arsonists. Individual papers by McGrath, Jillett, Cox and Black on how they attempt to assess dangerousness in clinical settings describe experiences most psychiatrists have endured. For the psychiatrist who is finding his problem patient too anxiety provoking to handle there is a helpful paper by McCulloch on how to seek the help of a special hospital. At £4.75 this is a 'best buy' not only