

on the other hand, there is no mention whatever of The Royal College of Psychiatrists and its predecessors, which together can be traced back to 1841. Equally conspicuous is the absence of any mention of the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, or its various incarnations, which stretches back in an unbroken line to 1853, the first journal in the world, in fact, devoted to psychiatry. And to bang the drum of chauvinism a little louder, may I point out that in certain quarters it is believed that the early history of American psychiatry is the history of British psychiatry spoken with an American accent.

In spite of these gripes, I have no hesitation in adding this book to those already recommended. A further bonus – at £35 it's a snip!

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Evolutionary Psychiatry: A New Beginning

By Anthony Stevens and John Price. London: Routledge. 1996. 267 pp. £47.50 (hb), £14.99 (pb)

The authors state that their aim in writing this book is to provide a firm, neutral, scientific foundation for psychiatry and social sciences, by considering modern man in his evolutionary context. To my mind, they fall short of their ambitious aspiration, but psychiatrists should find this book provocative and stimulating. Starting from the Jungian collective unconscious and Tinbergen's studies in ethology, they traverse anthropology and ICD-10 in their search for the roots of psychiatric disorders, asking what possible adaptive value each type of psychopathology might possibly have. *En route* the reader encounters many fascinating snippets about animal behaviour and some imaginative speculations on the aetiology of certain psychiatric disorders; sadomasochism and homosexuality are considered, but not dementia or childhood autism, which presumably ought to be explicable in the same way.

The key question posed on the cover of the book, "Why don't genes for depression and schizophrenia disappear from the gene pool?", is never satisfactorily answered.

Indeed, no evidence is presented for the existence of a gene for depression. The problem is that the processes of evolution are never made explicit. When Stevens and Price refer to evolution, it is not clear whether they are talking about Mendelian inheritance or cultural transmission. It is difficult to know for whom the book is intended: psychiatrists will not need the extended recapitulation of ICD-10, but would benefit from more expanded discussion of contentious aspects of evolutionary theory. The authors declare their faith in group selection, but offer no evidence in favour of this largely discredited hypothesis.

I am sure that if the authors put their minds to it, they would have no difficulty in thinking up ethological hypotheses for the phenomena of fragile X syndrome or Huntington's disease, but many of us who share Stevens' and Price's aspirations for a neutral scientific basis for psychiatry believe that the role of unstable trinucleotide repeats may be easier to validate than their evolutionary speculations.

This book will be of interest to psychiatrists working in many areas and should be available in medical libraries, but is not recommended for general purchase.

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Psychiatry for the Developing World

Edited by D. Tantam, L. Appleby & A. Duncan. London: Gaskell. 1996. 374 pp. £25.00. ISBN 0-902241-86-9

"Imagine a typical working day in the out-patient department of a University Hospital in a developing country. There may be over one hundred men, women and children waiting to see the doctor; some of them must have travelled over considerable distances, having spent the night camping near the hospital. Most of them come in family groups and quite a few are obviously physically sick. Apart from about a dozen familiar faces coming for a follow up visit the doctor has never before seen these people. As no-one ought to be turned back, there will be less than five minutes per 'case', though some would be given more time and some less".

This description from an early chapter of the book will ring very true for those who have worked in a developing country. It is working at this pace and in this type of setting that psychiatrists in many countries are managing complex clinical problems while simultaneously teaching staff and students from all disciplines and facing administrative problems well beyond those we face in the UK. The gulf between this reality and the world of textbooks, research and management written for British and North American students is great. The stated aim of this book is to bridge that gap.

Based on lectures and seminars from the Manchester diploma course for psychiatrists from the developing world, the book is divided into four parts covering 'general principles' – epidemiology and economics of mental health care, treatments, an outline of the main disorders, and a section on training and research. This final section will be of particular value. Orley and de Girolamo draw attention to the quite different role of the psychiatrist in developing countries. In these settings a psychiatrist must have the skills to inspire health professionals and political bodies, to convince service planners to evolve a mental health focus, to recognise mental illness and to be interested in addressing it, and to develop locally relevant services and teaching programmes that will improve services and the well-being of those with psychiatric disorders.

It is also the psychiatrist's role to ensure best clinical practice among all health workers seeing psychiatric patients. It is important to stress how isolated a psychiatrist in the developing world can be. There is considerable difficulty keeping up to date despite helpful books such as this. A chapter on acquiring information and communicating through the Internet and chapters on critical appraisal skills, the tenets of evidence-based medicine and the development of evidence-based guidelines would have been useful. Also, many service advances in less developed settings can emerge, through application of the tenets of Health Systems Research, from well-planned and executed studies with proper local participation. Another welcome addition to any future editions of this book would be chapters on the writing of grant applications and gaining funding.

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