

stress requires the same form of therapy, usually consisting of the nebulous 'relaxation training', is mistaken. As the title of the book implies, an integrated approach to therapy is suggested.

The remaining chapters give a comprehensive account of the various forms of stress management, divided into the physiological (i.e. relaxation therapies and life-style management), cognitive, and finally behavioural approaches. The theoretical perspective and developmental history of the treatments are described and also a general description of the process of treatment is provided. Clearly, to learn more about the individual forms of treatment one would need to read elsewhere, but adequate references for further reading are given.

Throughout the book, three case vignettes are used to link the chapters together. Although this initially seems rather contrived it does provide useful examples of how to assess and plan treatment. These cases also show how very different clinical situations can be approached in a uniform way. This is a well balanced book which is clearly directed towards an American market but can also be adequately utilised by the British professional dealing with stressed individuals.

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Stress and Medical Procedures. Edited by MARIE JOHNSTONE and LOUISE WALLACE. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1990. 184 pp. £25.00.

The recently published government report on pain exposed the shortcomings of the medical profession's ability to control pain and manage patients with post-operative pain. Such documents draw attention to the fact that modern medicine, for all its high-tech excellence, has a psychosocial dimension that should not be ignored. Hence the need for this timely book, which is divided into two sections. The first includes a theoretical review of stress and the second outlines stress in various medical settings. Included in the latter are diagnostic procedures, medical and surgical treatments, and obstetric and paediatric procedures.

The scene is set by the co-editors who contribute a useful preface and concluding chapter. They point out that the complex interaction of variables that have to be measured in research of this nature include not only features of the stressful stimulus (intensity, duration, etc.), but also the individual's appraisal and expectations (perceived control, social supports, etc.) as well as the diversity of responses.

Stephens contributes an excellent review of the factors that influence the pattern of psychobiological responses during stress, and describes an interesting study of subjects who were asked to attend to and analyse the sensations experienced during a disagreeable procedure.

Far from increasing physiological reactivity (as might be expected), the responses in these subjects were attenuated compared with those who had received no special instructions. This kind of research finding could be translated into clinical practice.

One theme running through this book is that the coping style of each individual subject is a critical determinant of the outcome of a medical procedure. This means that the therapist has to utilise existing patterns of behaviour to help each patient cope more effectively with the stress invoked by the particular procedure. Because some patients display an active, information-seeking mode of response they would be better suited to an approach in which specific information of a procedural and sensory nature was provided. Whereas those who cope with stress through avoidance means and depend on the health care provider for support would perhaps be better served by provision of information of a more general, less descriptive, and less threatening nature.

The authors of the chapter on paediatric procedures draw attention to the potential cost-effectiveness of procedures that might reduce time in hospital, need for analgesia, psychiatric morbidity and other consequences of painful hospital procedures. As we move into the 1990s and hospitals contract out their medical and surgical services to purchasers of health care, health psychologists have an extra incentive to develop this field of enquiry and to translate the findings of their research into practical (and financial) realities. This well edited book provides a useful database and I recommend it for those wishing to investigate this increasingly complex field.

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The Biological Basis of Psychiatric Treatment. Edited by S. GERSHON and R. POHL. Basle: Karger. 1990. £118.40.

This volume is the third of a series called "Progress in basic and clinical pharmacology". It is a multi-authored volume and covers not only treatment aspects of the most common and important psychiatric conditions, but also the available evidence for a biological aetiology of schizophrenia, depression and anxiety disorders. The main strength of this book is an attractive philosophy of mixing information about complex neurotransmitter physiology with clinical aspects of the common psychiatric disorders and their management. This makes it more readable than most texts on this subject.

Most chapters outline the historical background for the biological approach to the conditions described, and detail both animal and human studies with an appropriate emphasis upon the limitations of the former when applied to psychiatric conditions in the latter. The