

others to consider its possibilities in fields where, up to now, it has not figured.

LOUIS MARTEAU, *Psychotherapist, Dymrna Centre, London*

MMPI-2 Assessing Personality and Psychotherapy. By JOHN R. GRAHAM. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1990. 335 pp. £27.50.

MMPI-2 in Psychological Treatment. By JAMES BUTCHER. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1990. 195 pp. £16.00.

The original Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), claimed by both authors of these books to be the most widely used personality inventory, was first published more than 50 years ago. Over these years there have been a number of criticisms concerning the low reliability of the scales, their factorial structure, the fact that many of the items were out of date and the lack of any theoretical underpinning.

The MMPI-2 was developed to overcome some of these problems. These two books describe how this was done and discuss how the new test is to be used in clinical practice. Both authors are acknowledged as experts with the MMPI and were involved with the development of the new version. As might be expected, both books are authoritative. Together they provide all the information necessary to use the MMPI-2.

The new test differs from the old in the following ways. The standardisation sample is far larger and more representative. There can be no doubt that, in this respect, the new test is superior. Items were changed where necessary to improve their relevance, and new ones were written to extend the scope of the test. Some items which had proven objectionable were removed. This modified item pool was tried out and the best items were selected for the scales. Both authors insist that these modifications improve the test, but allow the new scales to be interpreted in the light of the vast research on the old form.

The items of the new scales certainly appear to be an improvement, although the internal consistency of the scales is still low. Only five have alphas above 0.7 and this is still far too low to be confident of the test scores. Similarly, the evidence for the validity of the new scales is far from convincing. For example, rating scales are used as a criterion for the scales' scores. However, the correlations reported are very low; the sample size was so huge that a non-significant correlation must have been hard to obtain. Furthermore, rating scales are somewhat similar to the items so that some overlap is inevitable.

These books are complementary rather than competitive. That by Graham gives all the information about the test which a user is likely to need and it serves

as a useful reference book. That by Butcher is more specialised, being concerned with the use of the MMPI-2 as a guide for treatment. However, although shorter, it contains a good description of MMPI-2.

In summary these are sound, authoritative books on the new MMPI-2. They are essential reading for anyone who intends to use the test. My disappointment with both of these books is that they are too uncritical, although I suppose that this is inevitable, given the involvement of their authors with the test.

PAUL KLINE, *Professor of Psychometrics, University of Exeter*

The Preschool Child: Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment. By PAUL V. TRAD. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons. 1989. 658 pp. £50.75.

This book sets out to provide an "integrated approach to the developmental phenomena that occur in children of preschool age" (2-6 years). It has five sections: the developmental perspective, assessment, clinical syndromes, specific risk factors during the preschool years, and management.

The orientation of the book is clearly North American, with the use of DSM-III-R terminology throughout. The text is liberally supported by references, including recently published work, and enlivened by case illustrations.

It is certainly comprehensive, covering not only a wide range of issues, but a wide range of childhood psychiatric conditions and approaches to treatment. As far as specific conditions are concerned, the author does not confine himself to those which occur only in the preschool child, and in discussing these conditions the book resembles a general textbook of child psychiatry. Nevertheless, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the developmental issues particularly associated with preschool children, with great emphasis on the role of play in both assessment and management. The author is clearly dynamically orientated in his approach to therapy, and the sections on behaviour therapy in particular do not do justice to the extent to which these methods are applicable to preschool problems.

Many British child psychiatrists will find some sections startling – for example, that on personality disorders in preschool children. Little attention is paid to prevention of problems in this age group.

This book is a valuable contribution to the currently available texts on child psychiatry as it succeeds in addressing many of the specific issues concerned with the assessment and management of preschool children with psychiatric problems.

GILLIAN FORREST, *Consultant Child Psychiatrist, The Park Hospital for Children, Oxford*