

example, the research being conducted by attachment theorists.

This book is a welcome addition to the literature on infant observation. It is accessible and is a valuable introductory text, but it is also informative about recent developments. I enjoyed and valued the wealth of observational material. The capacity to be an observer can be very helpful in psychiatric practice. Even though most trainees are unlikely to embark on an infant observation training, a book like this, with lots of examples, offers a picture of the value of observation and the learning potential therein. It is suitable for a departmental library.

---

**Mary Morton** Consultant Psychotherapist,  
Central Scotland Healthcare NHS Trust, Old Denny  
Road, Larbert FK5 4SD

### **Making Rational Mental Health Services**

Edited by Michele Tansella. Rome: Il Pensiero Scientifico Editore. 1997. 245 pp. ISBN 1-1211-89-X

In 1991 the European Network for Mental Health Service Evaluation (ENMESH) was formed. Two conferences have since been held, and this volume consists of papers presented at two meetings in Verona, Italy in 1996. It is divided into four sections covering needs assessment, service description and evaluation, mental health costs, and public health issues.

The book begins with an examination of the role of needs assessment in service evaluation and delivery. Issues related to the definition of population needs are explored, and one innovative measurement tool (the Mental Illness Needs Index) developed by Glover *et al* is presented. Wiersma *et al* claim that individual needs assessment should be an ongoing process because the types of need may change over time. In a study they show that improvements, in terms of needs being met, were not realised after 15 years of onset of psychotic illness. This is in contrast to what many may have previously assumed. Two papers focus on the particular need for hospital beds which, not surprisingly, was believed to be inversely related to the provision of community alternatives.

Efficient ways of organising services have to be established once needs have been assessed, and this raises a number of questions. Who are services aimed at? How can they be measured? How can they be compared across cultures? How can their continuity be preserved? What effects differences in their utilisation? These are addressed in the second section. Of particular interest was the paper by Huxley and others from Manchester.

The tendency to focus on 'severe mental illness' may be correct, but they show that the definitions of this concept are varied. This section concludes by reporting on two evaluations of models of community intervention. Neither of these showed that there were significant clinical advantages – a finding which is in common with other work in this area.

Health economics is growing in prominence in mental health research, and the fact that this book has a section devoted to

costs illustrates this well. We are taken through a history of the demand for and supply of economics research by Knapp, who informs us that we are on a journey from 'blissful ignorance' of economics to 'sublime sophistication' in the way it is used. This is followed by reports of two evaluations with a cost component, both (encouragingly) based on similar methodologies. The importance of such methodological commonality is stressed in the final paper of this section.

The book ends with four papers discussing the wider public health aspects of mental health services, policies and evaluation. An outline of the contributions made by the World Health Organisation are followed by a piece by Goldberg emphasising the differences in service development across Europe. The penultimate paper stresses the importance of measuring services effectively at a macro level so as to aid policy initiatives. Finally, the problems of evaluating services in a consistent way are discussed by Sartorius. In particular he points out that terms and methods should be agreed, and that there needs to be education as to how data should be collected and used.

This is an ambitious text which succeeds in bringing together research which is clearly varied in scope and aim. It is recommended to all those who wish to gain an understanding of current work and future trends in European mental health care evaluation.

---

**Paul McCrone** Lecturer in Health Economics,  
Section of Community Psychiatry, Institute of  
Psychiatry, De Crespigny Park, Denmark Hill,  
London SE5 8AF