

Antimanics, Anticonvulsants and Other Drugs in Psychiatry. Edited by GRAHAM D. BURROWS, TREVOR R. NORMAN and BRIAN DAVIES. Amsterdam: Elsevier. 1987. 451 pp. US \$133.35, Dfl. 300.00.

This is the last of a series of four handbooks, and contains a useful mixture in which patients and the clinical aspects of their management are to the forefront. Ample space is given to novel information, reviews, summaries, and conclusions which can be appreciated irrespective of the preceding volumes. The first four chapters consider the current status of lithium, carbamazepine, and antipsychotic drugs in the treatment of hypomania and mania. The specific advice given for clinical situations is particularly helpful. Intermediate chapters give a detailed appraisal of anticonvulsants, including their use in the mentally handicapped and in pregnancy. Pseudoseizures, and the effect of anticonvulsants on affect and cognition, are well reviewed. Anticholinergic drugs, beta-blockers in schizophrenia and in anxiety, and the effects of cortico-steroids and of oral contraceptives are all discussed in detail.

The latter half of the book also has a clinical leaning, dealing with tic disorders, Huntington's chorea, and Parkinsonism, but the focus returns to drugs used in phobic disorders, in alcoholism, and in the treatment of dementia. The role of analgesics and psychotropic drugs in pain management is clearly outlined. The concluding chapters cover sexual dysfunction, psychiatric reactions to non-psychotropic drugs, and the issue of compliance.

The style and format make comfortable reading and, matching the content, the print and finish of the book reach the highest standards. It would be difficult to find a better guide to the therapeutic areas described here. The book provides liberally the sort of information essential for broad clinical practice and needed frequently in liaison work in a District General Hospital.

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Stress Response Syndromes (2nd edn). By MARDI JON HOROWITZ, Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson. 1986. 358 pp. \$35.00.

This is an important book on an important subject. It fully deserves its second edition within 8 years of publication. Post-traumatic stress disorders are, sadly, increasingly relevant in psychiatry as society becomes both more violent and more caring. This book is at one level a primer on psychotherapeutic help for victims of trauma – by rape, sudden bereavement, or injury. It describes with great sensitivity and detail the feelings of fear, rage, shame, guilt, and numbness associated with trauma and focuses in particular on 'intrusive images' of violence that can haunt victims for years afterwards. It

shows how, if these feelings are to be overcome, the meaning of the trauma in the patient's biography has to be understood; how, for example, a man with violent fantasies towards women will be doubly traumatised when a female passenger in his car is killed; or a woman who deals with low self-esteem by flirting may be plagued with shame following rape; or how a teenage girl will be devastated if her mother dies of a heart attack just after they have had a blazing row. The twin dangers faced by trauma victims are described: either emotional shut-down or being flooded with unmanageable feelings. It shows how, in the safety of a psychotherapy session, psychological controls can be relaxed enough for painful feelings to be contemplated and for psychological reintegration to occur. It demonstrates the great tact that is needed to decide when to offer support and sympathy and when to probe, and how different personality styles demand different approaches.

This book has many other important levels. Horowitz is that rare phenomenon: someone who is equally respected as a psychoanalyst and a researcher. As well as being a clinical treasure chest, the book also contains an elegant outcome study showing the efficacy of twelve-session brief psychoanalytic therapy in stress disorders, a scholarly review of Freudian theory on trauma, and an important integrated psychoanalytic/cognitive theoretical schema. Despite occasional verbosity it is very readable. It is an exemplary book, which all who are interested in applied psychotherapy should read.

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Key cases in Psychotherapy. Edited by WINDY DRYDEN. Beckenham: Croom Helm. 1987. 269 pp. £22.50.

It is difficult to do justice to this book in a short review. The editor's aim has been to show how therapists working with the benefits and limitations of their different schools of thought and practice grapple with patients who challenge their underlying assumptions and become instrumental in changing therapists' theory and practice.

Wessler, Lazarus, Prochaska and Ellis's experiences have been well integrated, and stimulate considerable interest. Thorne and Rowan arouse the anxieties they themselves felt over the risks taken when therapy moved into unchartered waters. Morrison, Aveline, Wile, Butt and Bannister each demonstrate their own significant lessons. Some contributions, however, may confuse the novice or irritate the experienced therapist. Prospective readers should taste a little of each contribution before making a final decision to buy.

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