

analysed and presented in an easily understandable style. The book covers a range of topics, from biological and genetic information, through medical issues, including pain management to financial issues for sufferers and support for their families. The authors have integrated clinical medical information with information on, and opinions about, social and cultural aspects of the condition, and the effects of social attitudes on sufferers and their families. They have brought together an extensive variety of issues in a manner which renders the book both a useful text for practitioners and a basis for people wishing to delve further into the implications of the problems that beset sufferers of the disease and those who carry the sickle cell trait.

The book is both down to earth and sufficiently erudite and 'research-based' to appeal to a wide readership. However, it does have the slight drawback that the discerning reader may need to pick and choose from among the varied chapters, depending on his or her own background and knowledge. Psychiatrists and psychologists need to have a grasp of the sort of problems covered in this book, and I recommend this book for departmental libraries, especially those serving areas with multi-ethnic populations.

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Foundations of Clinical Psychiatry. Edited by SIDNEY BLOCH and BRUCE SINGH. Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press. 1994. 472 pp. Aust \$49.95 (pb).

This book is aimed at students of medicine and other health sciences. It is divided into four broad sections: "An approach to psychiatry", "The range of psychiatric disorders", "Special clinical areas" and "Treatment". Both editors are respected writers and clinicians and have produced this book as a result of collaboration between two university departments of psychiatry. Therein lies the first problem – what expertise do the individual contributors have in relation to their subject matter? On reading many of the chapters the answer must decidedly be "none". Unfortunately the editors themselves only contributed to three chapters. Presumably the contributors are members of the academic departments of varying degrees of seniority, although their biographical and academic details are not provided. As a result the book is readable and accessible but lacking in depth. Indeed, vague generalisations abound: "patients with personality disorder are commonly predisposed to major psychiatric illnesses such as psychosis or depression" and "this pattern of illness means that maintenance and prophylactic use of antipsychotics, lithium, antidepressants

and other forms of psychotropic medication, in various combinations, form the cornerstone of medium- to long-term management". More worrying are the frank inaccuracies, such as "ICD-10 does not require diagnoses to be made on the other axes which are included in the DSM-III-R classification".

The breadth of topics covered conforms fairly predictably to what a neophyte medical student might claim was relevant. Teachers of medical students will appreciate the limitations of this approach and most departments now include a much greater breadth of subject matter, including psychiatric aspects of physical illness, basic research techniques, and so on. Moreover, this text includes a chapter for the politically correct entitled "Psychiatry of women", and although it mentions various types of pregnancy loss, the emotional consequences of induced abortion (an area of increasing research and clinical interest) is not included. More basic omissions are the absence of discussion of depot neuroleptics or the management of resistant depression. The chapter most likely to be of relevance to a newly qualified doctor, on the assessment of parasuicide and suicidal intent, was skimpy in the extreme.

In spite of these shortcomings there were some excellent chapters, notably "The psychiatric interview" and "Making sense of the psychiatric patient", and these should be read by the initiate into psychiatric training. The suggested reading at the end of each chapter is also more appropriate for aspiring psychiatrists than medical students, although the enthusiastic student who delves into some of these works may be stimulated to investigate the speciality further. Ethical aspects of psychiatry are considered in the chapter on forensic psychiatry, and while their inclusion is welcome it is unfortunate that this had to be under the rubric of forensic psychiatry since the issues are broader than this.

I cannot recommend this book to the student doctor who is presently overwhelmed with a multiplicity of textbooks, many of which are as readable, more comprehensive and presented in a more interesting manner. This pedestrian text has entered a crowded market and I have no doubt that the market will quickly give its verdict.

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The Neurological Boundaries of Reality. Edited by E. M. R. CRITCHLEY. London: Farrand Press. 1994. 448 pp. £29.50 (hb).

Edmund Critchley, following in the footsteps of his illustrious uncle, MacDonald Critchley, has an interest in the borderlands of neurology; to paraphrase an advert, he reaches the parts that other neurologists