

BOOK DASH

Stahl's Illustrated: Antidepressants

Edited by Stahl SM. USA: Cambridge University Press, 2009: 186. Paperback, £24 (US\$40). ISBN: 978-0521758529

"All Stahl but with substance"

This latest edition of Stahl's illustrated series published by Cambridge University Press is even more colourful than usual, both in terms of the figures and cartoons and the colours used to define the chapters. This book, which focuses solely on antidepressants has eight chapters, four of which deal specifically with antidepressant classes after having laid down, in an initial chapter, a foundation for the neurobiology of depression, and three deal with treatment strategies in special populations. The book is typical of Stahl's bestseller 'Essential Psychopharmacology' which is in its third edition. This book on antidepressants is

much more manageable than its more comprehensive 'parent' and will appeal to those who wish to make a quick start in understanding the psychopharmacology of depression and its treatment.

Over the years Stahl has developed his own 'language' and though this usually manages to simplify the complex, in some instances the sheer sophistication of the biology of the brain precludes transformation into a form that can be presented clearly for assimilation. Having said this, few authors could have achieved better and the text is formidable. It forms part of a series of nine books that in addition to antidepressants address antipsychotics, mood stabilisers, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety and stress, pain and fibromyalgia, sleep/wake disorders, dementia and drug abuse.

Alongside providing valuable learning and updating clinicians on

psychopharmacology, the book is a helpful desk reference and can also be used to illustrate mechanisms of action to patients so that they understand how medication works, why on occasion it might not, and the side effects that can sometimes emerge with treatment.

Once again as with all his work Stahl has managed to successfully combine style with substance. This book will be useful to anyone interested in learning about antidepressants but in particular to those wanting to enjoy the process.

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