

to learn from pure pharmacology textbooks alone.

It is still reasonable to admit that prescribing in practice is often governed by the knowledge of potential side-effects and their manipulation for the patient's clinical benefit, with only a few choices informed by pure evidence-based research. The authors hold out hope that, for instance, with anti-depressants 'over the coming decades, genomics, functional imaging and tools like QEEG may provide additional data on which to make a clinical decision' but accept that 'at present clinical judgment remains the only viable option'.

The authors state they have increased the use of tables and illustrations in this edition but their appearance is still relatively infrequent and many of the illustrations are of the chemical structures of the individual drugs which is probably of little practical concern to clinicians. The information is as up to date as any textbook can be in this continually expanding area.

This book will be of most benefit to psychiatrists in training, either early in their training to supplement pharmacological sections of standard text books or later to expand basic knowledge and of course as an essential aid to passing 'the exam'. It will be excellent choice, one which will result in a well thumbed and annotated book by the end of training which the user will continue to dip in and out of throughout their career. I doubt that this book will be as desired by the experienced psychiatrist as more practical and concise options are likely to be preferred. As a test I searched it for advice regarding a recent clinical case. A treatment and classification defying patient whose mental state and attendant aggression improved after multiple combinations on high-dose quetiapine and sodium valproate but who subsequently developed a moderate intermittent neutropenia and persistent hyponatraemia. This book did not offer any possible solutions not previously explored and indeed neutropenia and hyponatraemia per se are not included in the index. It would thus not be the first port of call for clinical pharmacological conundrums ahead of the Maudsley, a well honed internet search or a good senior registrar!

This book should be on the core reading list of psychiatrists in training either as a personal copy or perhaps as part of a jointly owned group of reference books for a membership study group. Its principal competitor is probably Stahl's *Essential Psychopharmacology*. The latter offers more coverage of the basic scientific underpinnings of psychopharmacology which is then used as the basis for prescribing practice, albeit at times somewhat hypothetically. Its trademark extensive use of illustrations appeals to many but can be criticized as too focused on short-attention-span visuals for the Powerpoint generation over good old fashioned do-it-yourself text based learning. At the end of the day it's a matter of personal choice.

The recommendation of this book for purchase by hospital libraries is automatic.

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## Psychotherapy Is Worth It: A Comprehensive Review of its Cost-Effectiveness

Edited by Susan G. Lazar, MD & the Committee on Psychotherapy from the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry. Published by American Psychiatric Publishing Inc., Washington DC and London, England (2010). ISBN 978-0-87318-215-7

The title of this book makes a bold statement about the value of psychotherapy in today's world. It does not ask the question as to whether psychotherapy might be useful or valuable – 'Is Psychotherapy Worth It?' – or even make a bland statement about the general issues considered by the authors – 'The Worth of Psychotherapy'. Rather the title makes known before the reader ever opens a page that the authors have come to a strong conclusion about the inherent merit of psychotherapy – "Psychotherapy Is Worth It". This forthright statement sets the scene for tone and approach taken in addressing the issues explored in this comprehensive book.

The aim of this work is to explore psychotherapy in terms of its cost-effectiveness for health services and the public. Again, the authors are clear in terms of their goals and methods in providing this review. They stress the need to differentiate between cost-effective services and "cheap" ones. The authors acknowledge that cost-effective services require financial input and the focus is therefore on long-term value rather than money saved per say. In addition, the authors acknowledge that cost-effectiveness can be achieved at a societal level rather than a service level, for example by reducing sick days due to mental illness. Drawing this distinction is important as this work likely will not be of significant interest or use to those looking to make financial cut-backs or reduce resources in the short term.

Psychotherapy is taken here as a broad term referring to a variety of therapeutic interventions using psychological processes and primarily executed through talking. This description of psychotherapy incorporates many theoretical orientations and a range of approaches from brief supportive interventions to intensive long-term analyses. As such the range of supports which are explored in this volume are very inclusive, although care is taken to delineate the relative merits of different approaches when dealing with each specific diagnosis.

The range of difficulties explored is also very broad ranging from anxiety and depression to borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia, and psychotherapeutic work with children. A chapter is also devoted to long-term and intensive therapy which is less commonly offered within traditional mental health services. Chapters relating to different populations are each authored separately. As a result the organisation of each chapter is different and direct comparisons cannot always be made on the face value of information provided. Having said this it is clear that the methodology used by each author is consistent. In addition, attempts have clearly been made to explore both clinical and cost effectiveness and to separate these issues where appropriate. Clinical vignettes relevant to the particular population are also used throughout the book

to demonstrate cases where psychotherapy proved valuable. While these add interest for the reader clear and explicit links with the extensive literature provided are not always made.

This book would be of great value to organisations lobbying to set up or expand services focusing on particular patient groups. However, although mention is made of the use of psychotherapy services for client groups with mixed presentations as would be typical in most mental health settings, no emphasis is placed on the use of therapeutic intervention for individual clients who present with multiple co-morbid mental health problems. It is true that there is a dearth of research in this area as research is easier to conduct with homogenous groups of participants. However, some information on the use of psychotherapy with this diverse group would certainly add to the practical use of this volume, particularly given the prevalence of co-morbid diagnoses among psychiatric populations.

The authors of this volume are aware of the various issues which need to be held in mind when lobbying for the use of psychotherapy including balancing cost-effectiveness with clinical effectiveness and other less easily quantifiable societal values. However, they do make a clear assertion about the value of this mode of intervention based on a comprehensive review of recent literature. The reader is left in no doubt as to the fact that, at least from the perspective of cost-effectiveness, psychotherapy is worth it.

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## Clinical Manual for Treatment of Alcoholism and Addiction

**Avram H Mack, MD, Amy L Harrington, MD and Richard J Frances, MD. Publisher: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc. ISBN 978-1-58562-373-0**

This book has a practical way of dealing with topics that are especially interesting for a junior doctor on call in psychiatry. An on call doctor has to make quick but appropriate decisions in various scenarios such as: how to deal with a patient, who is admitted for surgery, denies alcohol abuse but appears to be in the early stages of delirium tremens; behaviour towards somebody being assessed in casualty for substance abuse. This book aids the on call doctors in such situations. Other treatment settings, such as general practitioners surgery and outpatient departments are also targeted suitably by this book.

This book is organised into 14 chapters which include basic topics like epidemiology, neurobiology, evaluation and assessment, definition, presentation and diagnosis, treatment modalities and approaches. However other important issues such as addiction in children and adolescents, women, elderly and minority population, behavioural addictions and forensics are also included. The introductory chapter lists

some of the therapist's attributes, which are helpful in working with patients with substance use disorders (SUD). This is followed by a chapter on statistics relevant to substance use in the United States of America. Such concise statistics is of particular relevance to health care planners. The next chapter on neurobiology and genetics of addictions explores the dynamics between familial factors, environmental influences, psychosocial issues and personal choices. A later chapter on evaluation and assessment gives an exhaustive list of rating scale and instruments useful for research purposes and also for identifying alcoholism in primary care scenarios. This chapter also includes laboratory evaluations useful for substance specific assessment. Following chapters go on to talk about the presentation, evaluation and diagnosis, history and treatment of substance use disorders. Additionally the chapter on behavioural addictions makes an interesting read. The book concludes with focused chapter on public health issues and dealing with addiction in the workplace. Furthermore, each chapter has a summary at the end which lists key points. This summary helps in clearly expressing the take-home message of the relevant chapter.

It is important to point out that the book offers an excellent overview of treatment of alcohol use disorders and addictions. The book also handles each substance separately in a concise manner. Wherever required case vignettes are included and relevant websites cited. The clarity in demarcation and good referencing gives the book an accessible style and is also suitable for quick reference. Such clarity is often required by an on call doctor who has to make rapid but correct judgment.

However some topics could have been improved. Especially there is a need to highlight alcohol use and addiction in context of the family. The topic of support groups needs to be explored more, eg. more information on the concept and working of Alcoholics Anonymous and other support groups such as Lifering, Women for Sobriety and Able and NEw Women (ANEW). It would have been preferable to have some more information on the treatment of doctors and allied health professionals with substance use disorders. The book should also have dealt about the emerging problem of "Head Shop" products and how health care professionals should best tackle this issue. In summary, the book is a practical yet stimulating read. It is of technical value, if one can make allowances for its apparent US centredness.

Thus this book is recommended for use by trainees in psychiatry as well as therapists. Experienced clinicians can use this book as a quick reference and also use it for supervision and training of junior doctors. Moreover, the book is a valuable resource for multi-disciplinary teaching. Hopefully it will serve to make clinicians better trained, more informed and better prepared to deal with people having substance use disorders.

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