

to be sought with such alacrity. More importantly, I would like to have seen more emphasis on the concomitant emotional abuse which is sustained when sexual abuse takes place. I cannot agree with the authors that those who have been sexually abused by parents have only "sometimes" been emotionally abused as well. Emotional abuse in such circumstances is inevitable. The longer term effects on personality are therefore all the more difficult to disentangle. I did find myself wondering how adults who have been struggling for many years, with or without professional help, to come to terms with their abuse, would receive the almost revelatory message of this book.

As a whole, this book hangs together well. I will certainly press the registrars working with me to read this book, and could confidently suggest to the many parents who disclose to me that they could also benefit from doing so.

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**Solving Conundrums in Clinical Psychiatry: A Guide to Viva Voce Examinations.** By BANKOLE A. JOHNSON. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1991. 208 pp. £14.95 (pb).

This deserves a place on the short bookshelf of high-yield, high-intensity revision aids for the final run-up to MRCPsych Part II. It provides a source book of clinical case vignettes aimed in particular at the viva voce section of the exam. Thirty-two chapters on a wide range of topics are dealt with in the style of question and answer, with accompanying footnotes of core clinical principles.

Questions are framed as though by the examiner, and answers as though by the candidate. Vignettes range from on-call situations to common and less common clinical problems of assessment, differential diagnosis and management. Answers throughout conform to a logically constructed framework, using first principles, a technique particularly reliable in the potentially anxiety-making exam situation (and one which makes for good clinical practice). Brief basic references with the Oxford Textbook as a core text appear at the end of each chapter. The main index seems comprehensive, and the subject index convenient. Useful cross references are provided. The use of boxed algorithms throughout underlines the logical framework. Often the starting point is the basic question of mental illness/no mental illness. The sequence of taking a history from the patient and from an informant, assessing mental state, assessing personality, considering the role of physical factors and performing physical examination, leads to the framing of diagnostic assessment and management plan in

biological, psychological and social terms, with emphasis on a multidisciplinary approach.

While the individual clinician may differ on fine details of management in a few cases, the logic is sound, and the book will help MRCPsych candidates marshal their knowledge to maximum efficacy. It might also serve professionals from other disciplines as a useful jumping-off point for discussion of clinical problems.

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**Personality: The Psychometric View.** By PAUL KLINE. London: Routledge. 1993. 169 pp. £10.99.

Those with a research interest in the assessment of personality will welcome this as a useful and timely book, though clinicians brought up on typological systems of classification may find themselves on unfamiliar soil. The author, a psychologist who has conducted extensive research in the field, expounds a psychometric model of personality defined as the sum of an individual's traits which determine and explain all behaviour.

There is a useful review of the major instruments available for assessing personality, including projective, objective, and questionnaire-based personality tests, with a discussion of their respective reliability and validity. There follows a clear and detailed discussion of the role of factor analysis in the scientific study of personality, and in the development of the work of Cattell, Eysenck and others. The author refers several times to the "big five" factors of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience, which underlie the variance in all the above tests. Being by far the most widely used of all personality instruments, the MMPI is discussed in some detail, and it is concluded that because of its serious flaws it should now be gracefully retired. The chapter discussing the application of these tests in education and industry will be of less interest to most readers.

The author points out that the estimation of the heritability of personality factors is a useful form of external validation of those factors, and he discusses some of the methods used in partitioning the variance into genetic and environmental components. He concludes that there is a large genetic component to the population variance in personality.

This readable and affordable book covers many topics not clearly dealt with elsewhere, although the lack of any discussion of personality disorder, or of the many assessment instruments available, will limit its usefulness for psychiatrists.

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