

Severe Depression: Oxford Psychiatry Library

McIntyre, R. S., & Nathanson, J. Oxford University Press 2010 ISBN 978-0-19-958768-1

This is one of the Oxford Psychiatry Library series, designed as pocket references for the clinician. It is certainly compact enough to fit in most pockets and the authors and editors have managed to pack a huge amount of information between its covers. The major topics are covered including the definition of severe depression, and medical comorbidity, as well what might be considered the 'meat', that is, the treatment of severe depression. Each chapter has key points identified at the start of the chapter, and there are several useful diagrams and tables. The text is somewhat small and there is a necessary denseness to some of the paragraphs (in that any redundant text was presumably edited out for the sake of brevity), which may put some readers off dipping into the text in hope of finding clinical nuggets. The chapter on psychotherapy, while acknowledging briefly the role of interpersonal psychotherapy, focuses almost exclusively on cognitive psychotherapy and cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy. The tables referring to aspects of psychopharmacology were particularly useful as were the sections on rTMS and DBS. The inclusion of various rating scales as appendices was very welcome.

Overall, this is a welcome addition to the various pocket reference guides available in psychiatry; severe depression, particularly of the treatment-resistant type, is one of the major challenges in psychiatry. It would not be suitable for the undergraduate, or perhaps even for the pre-membership trainee; I would see it as becoming well-thumbed by consultants and also by senior trainees, or specialist registrars who are actively involved in treatment decisions for severely depressed patients.

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Stress-Induced and Fear Circuitry Disorders: Advancing the Research Agenda for DSM-V

Gavin Andrews, Dennis S. Charney, Paul J. Sirovatka, Darrel A. Regier. Washington, D.C. American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc., 2009, 330pp., \$60.00

In June 2005, the Stress-Induced and Fear Circuitry Disorders Workgroup made up of World experts met to discuss four disorders: post-traumatic stress disorders, panic disorder and agoraphobia, social phobia and specific phobias. Subsequently, the above book was written detailing their

discussions and findings. The book's aim was to examine these disorders in detail, ascertain whether these disorders were stable across the lifespan, whether they formed a cohesive and distinct group and to identify any gaps in knowledge and possible future avenues for research in relation to these disorders. Discussions also focused on several other points, including stress and psychological factors associated with these disorders; co-morbid alcohol and substance misuse, and current genetic, neuroimaging and neuro-chemical research findings in relation to these disorders.

There are many positive aspects to this book. The book has contributions from many experts in the field and is invariably comprehensive with an extensive bibliography at the end of each chapter. The book is well written although perhaps the chapter on post-traumatic disorder was sometimes difficult to follow. Of particular mention were the chapters describing the role of serotonin, the role of cognition, neuroimaging findings and the chapter describing continuity and aetiology of these disorders, which were all very comprehensive and clear and gave excellent summaries of pertinent research.

The chapter on anxiety disorders in African Americas and other ethnic minorities was perhaps a little scant, and a discussion of other ethnic minorities would have been welcomed. There is some description in the chapter on stress factors that relates to other ethnic minorities. The chapter on genetics which introduced and explained many genetic findings and concepts related to genetic research in a clear fashion, fell down in my opinion as it drew heavily on the authors own research and appeared to reiterate information and findings contained in other chapters.

There were areas where the book could be improved upon. Some graphs / images particularly in relation to neuroimaging findings would have been helpful for the reader and a greater use of tables to describe diagnostic criteria and summarise research findings would also have been helpful.

Whilst, other anxiety disorders and indeed recurrent depressive disorder were mentioned in this book, I feel that there is a reasonable argument for discussing generalised anxiety disorder to a greater extent. The book mentions several concepts without explanation including neuropeptides, "backward masking techniques" and a number of brain regions and their connections which require good baseline neuroscience knowledge and may not be suited to some readers. Other concepts are well described throughout the book including anxiety sensitivity, preparedness, heritability and attentional bias training.

Overall, despite these minor criticisms, I think this book is a valuable reference book for mental health professionals and may act as a more detailed text for those with an academic interest in anxiety disorders.

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