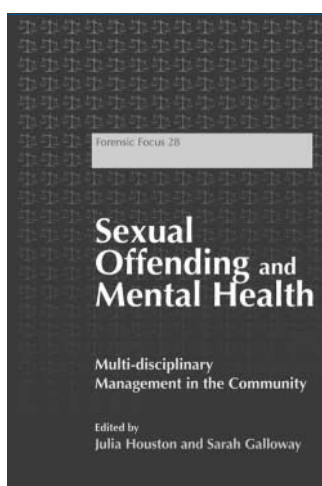


**Sexual Deviance:  
Theory, Assessment,  
and Treatment (2nd edn)**

Edited by D. Richard Laws  
& William T. O'Donohue.  
Guilford Press. 2008.  
US\$70 (hb). 642pp.  
ISBN: 9781593856052

services for sex offenders in the UK. You get a clear sense of what a mental health service can and should do. For example, they offer assessment, treatment and case consultation for individuals within mental health and criminal justice systems where issues arise concerning mental illness, personality disorder or paraphilia. There is also the important issue of men who present with troubling fantasies or behaviour, but without a conviction – clear guidelines are given on how to deal with these clinical issues. For anyone who has any doubts, the book clearly sets out why mental health services have a crucial role to play in the management of sexual violence.

There has been a recent glut of books on sex offending. The field is small, so the same experts contribute repeatedly to most edited volumes, often saying very similar things. I had a couple of 'groundhog' moments reading these two books, but that does not take away from the quality and importance of the material. For a clinician working with sexual offenders, these books are essential reading. I will use them to inform my assessments and formulations, to guide the advice I give to other agencies, to better consider treatment options, to inform service development and to prompt and formulate clinical research questions. The psychiatrist willing to take on board the information and messages in these books, should, when confronted with the task of assessing a complex sexual offender with personality or sexual psychopathology, be able to avoid the 'opinion: not mentally ill' culture and therapeutic nihilism that characterises the current response in most cases.



**Sexual Offending  
and Mental Health.  
Multi-disciplinary  
Management  
in the Community**

Edited by Julia Houston  
& Sarah Galloway.  
Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 2008.  
£25 (pb). 288pp.  
ISBN: 9781843105503

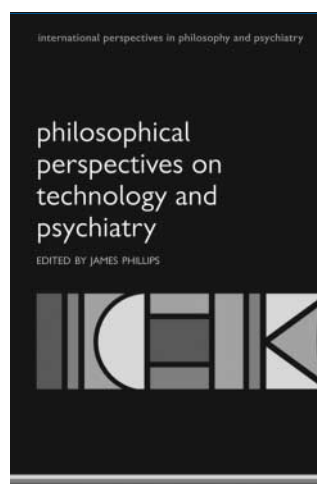
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doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.108.056408

These books were already on my wish list when I was asked to review them. So, as a psychiatrist with a special interest in the assessment and management of sex offenders, was I right to covet them?

The first edition of *Sexual Deviance* was a key reference for those in the field. This second edition, with chapters written by international experts, is probably now the essential reference work. Following a thought-provoking introduction, there are new chapters on aetiology and changes in sexual deviation over the lifespan. There follows the meat of the book: each 'clinical syndrome' has two chapters, the first on psychopathology and theory, the second on assessment and treatment. New syndromes covered include internet offending, sexual deviance in females and multiple paraphilias. Chapters on legal issues and neurobiology follow. Grubin's chapter sets out elegantly the role of medication in the treatment of sexual aggression, an area which has sadly been neglected by psychiatrists in the UK. Laws' final chapter cogently argues for a public health approach. This is a comprehensive, scholarly and up-to-date account of the state of the art in both theory and practice. Gaps and deficiencies in the research evidence, contentious issues and problems for practitioners are set out to guide clinicians and provide useful pointers to researchers. This is a superb and indispensable book for those involved in the field.

*Sexual Offending and Mental Health* is essential for anyone working in or developing a clinical service for sexual offenders. Largely written by clinicians from the Sex Offender Service at the Shaftesbury Clinic in London, it is a wonderfully practical clinical book. The service is one of a handful of mental health



**Philosophical  
Perspectives  
on Technology  
and Psychiatry**

Edited by James Phillips.  
Oxford University Press. 2008.  
£32.95 (pb). 256pp.  
ISBN: 9780199207428

This book comprises 17 essays on the theme of technology and psychiatry. The term 'technology' in the title is used more broadly than many readers might anticipate. In this volume, it embraces the general application of scientific, rationalist thinking to the treatment of mental ill health and the impact of technological imperatives on our mental wellbeing and patterns of living. Thus defined, it includes not only pharmacological and other physical treatments but also the common forms of psychotherapy.

The essays cover a diverse range of topics and it would be impossible to summarise each of these in a short review. A common theme is the need to balance the benefits to psychiatry of scientific rationalism, such as new pharmacological treatments