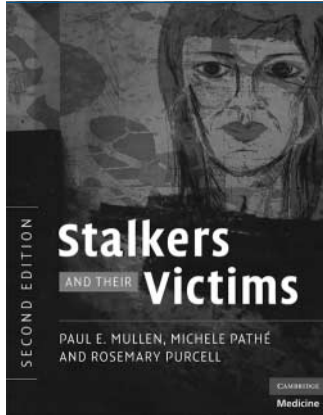


## Book reviews

Edited by Allan Beveridge, Femi Oyeboode  
and Rosalind Ramsay



### Stalkers and their Victims (2nd edn)

By Paul E. Mullen, Michele Pathé  
& Rosemary Purcell.  
Cambridge University Press. 2008.  
£35.00 (pb). 334pp.  
ISBN: 978051732413

It is 9 years since the first edition of this book was published. Since then there has been an explosion of interest in stalking, both in popular culture and as a subject for academic research. In the first edition, a foreword by Anthony Clare (sadly no longer with us) highlighted the book as representing ‘the definitive account of one of the pathological phenomena of our fractured times, of gripping fascination to lay and professional readers alike’. I am happy to report that the second edition builds on this reputation and presents a fusion of exceptional research, clinical experience and sociological exploration that makes it unique in its field.

Stalking is no longer a new categorisation of human behaviour, as described in the first edition, but a well-recognised problem behaviour, ranging from the immature suiter making annoying and crude attempts to start a relationship to the predatory and dangerous sex offender (thankfully rare) who stalks victims without their knowledge before an assault. In between lies a range of behaviours difficult to define and categorise. And herein lies one of the main problems in stalking research – how can one effectively research such a diverse behaviour reflecting such a complex range of motivations? The development of a now widely adopted classification of stalking remains one of the great achievements of the authors, in addition to proposing definitions that promote research internationally.

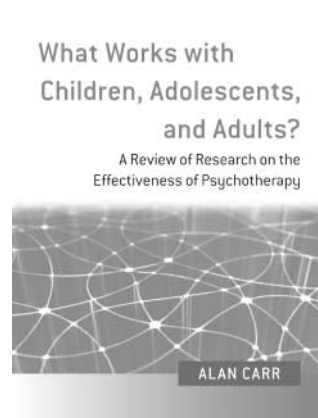
This second edition is longer than the first, with a more readable layout. It updates and expands previously explored topics, with discussions on stalking as a social construction and social reality, stalking among juveniles, female stalkers, stalking of health professionals (my interest), legal aspects of what is a criminal behaviour in many jurisdictions, and stalking of celebrities and public figures. Its skill, related to the close and long-standing working relationship of the authors, lies in its ability to explore complex topics with a consistency, freshness and clarity to satisfy the interested as well as the academic reader. Summary boxes and case vignettes throughout provide focus to illustrate and highlight clinical aspects of the challenges raised. Unlike in other texts, there is an emphasis on the management of stalkers (as well as victims), with separate chapters on risk management and therapeutic approaches to the stalker.

*Stalkers and their Victims* remains the definitive account of this problem behaviour, written in a scholarly and highly readable

style. It would be of interest to a wide range of clinicians and also to those professionals, unfortunately not uncommon, who have themselves been victims of stalking.

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### What Works with Children, Adolescents, and Adults? A Review of Research on the Effectiveness of Psychotherapy

By Alan Carr  
Routledge. 2008.  
£65.00 (hb). 400 pp.  
ISBN: 9780415452908

In his book, Alan Carr gathers together and summarises a large body of evidence. Covering a comprehensive range of presentations across the age spectrum and wading through a huge number of systematic reviews and meta-analyses must have required great stamina. Carr starts by explaining the background to and methods used in psychotherapy research. He then covers research examining factors influencing outcome that are common to all psychotherapies (such as quality of therapeutic relationship), before undertaking an extensive review of the outcome literature diagnosis by diagnosis for psychotherapy with children, adolescents, adults and older people. The book is written in an accessible, easy to understand style, with a helpful summary at the end of each section. However, what the book has achieved in abundance in breadth, it lacks equally in depth.

What more in-depth examinations of the psychotherapy literature have found is that the ‘contextual’ (or common factors) model explains the research findings much better than the ‘medical model’ (or diagnosis-specific techniques). All recognised formal psychotherapies are effective to roughly the same degree for all common mental health problems; factors such as quality of therapeutic alliance have a much more significant impact on outcome than matching diagnosis to technique. Whenever there is a fair, properly conducted, head-to-head comparison (i.e. similar duration of treatment using the same number of sessions with properly trained therapists who are supportive of the model of intervention they are using), the results are that each model is equally effective, and client/therapist variables, particularly therapeutic relationship, have a far greater impact on outcome than technique. There was nothing in this book that contradicted this repeated finding. Although Carr refers to these ‘common factor’ findings early on, he then loses his way by dividing the evidence by diagnostic categories, thus giving a misleading impression that for specific diagnoses there are specific techniques to be used that trump others. My knowledge of some of the studies and reviews he discusses also led me to conclude that Carr lacks a more critical