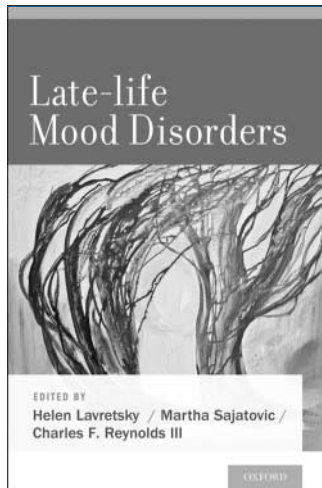


Book review

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Late-Life Mood Disorders

Edited by Helen Lavretsky,
Martha Sajatovic
& Charles F. Reynolds III.
Oxford University Press USA. 2013.
US\$145.00 (hb). 792 pp.
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Late-Life Mood Disorders is without doubt an ambitious text. It aspires to provide an up-to-date, evidence-based review of all aspects of this subject. Standing at 790 pages in length, it is not for the faint-hearted. It is text heavy, with minimal use of pictures, diagrams and tables to break up the script. On first glance it appears overwhelming and inaccessible. However, its 43 chapters are well structured, making it a book that can be dipped into for occasional use.

Excellent introductory chapters on epidemiology, public health burden and future research priorities provide an overview of information covered in subsequent sections. These chapters are stimulating, thought-provoking and prompt further reading.

The bulk of the text focuses on diagnosis, comorbid conditions, prevention and treatment. Chapters are dedicated to a broad range of topics, from bipolar disorder and non-major depression through to comorbid substance misuse and pain disorders. The majority of chapters have a clear clinical focus, offering evidence-based yet pragmatic advice on assessment and treatment. Some chapters stand out for particular praise. For example, the chapter on depression in dementia, which suggests potential management strategies while acknowledging limitations and gaps in the evidence. Other chapters focus on encouraging a deeper understanding of issues relating to late-life mood disorders. The chapters on suicide prevention and bereavement are particularly well written, inspiring and encouraging reflection on practice.

Further strengths of this book are chapters dedicated to late-life mood disorders in specific settings, such as hospices and nursing homes. Through reviewing the evidence specific to these settings, the barriers to effective assessment and management are identified and strategies to improve outcomes are proposed.

Finally, a section of the book is dedicated to recent advances in the neurobiology and biomarkers of late-life mood disorders. Chapters include a review of structural, molecular and functional neuroimaging, neuropathological markers and pharmacogenetics. The majority of these chapters can be easily read without requiring a high level of background knowledge. As a result, the authors have succeeded in making current research accessible and relevant for clinically focused psychiatrists.

This is not the most visually appealing or immediately accessible textbook. However, its scope and the breadth of topics covered are remarkable. It has the potential to be a core resource for all old age psychiatrists.

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