
Book review

New CME Library Audio Tapes: Alcoholism Addiction and Substance Abuse. S. BLUME, GOLD, M., O'MALLEY, *et al.* London: Eurospan Scientific, Technical and Medical Group. 1997. £99.50

This is an absolutely brilliant idea. The Eurospan Continuing Medical Education Library offers a package of handouts and tapes for personal study, and for the American market there is a small participant's evaluation form and post-test. For participating, you get Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points.

In this *Alcoholism, Addiction and Substance Abuse* package there are 12 substantive tapes and two bonus tapes. The five speakers are leading clinicians and between them they cover a wide range of subjects of immediate clinical relevance. Topics include diagnosis, integrated treatments using pharmacological and psychological approaches for alcohol dependence, substance misuse in women, an update on some new findings (though the findings from research such as Project MATCH had not been published and therefore could not be given), the psychopharmacology of anxiety in the context of substance misuse and other dual diagnosis issues. There is a very useful discussion on the neural changes in the ventral tegmental area and in other areas of the brain involved in reward mechanisms, as well as a discussion of craving and its relevance to a number of behaviours.

There is a considerable amount of material here to listen to, even if you do not necessarily agree with what is being said – for example,

Professor Schuckit prefers cognitive-behavioural therapy for anxiety over the use of anti-anxiety drugs, and Professor O'Malley seems dismissive of disulfiram – but, all in all, time is well spent with this set of tapes and the accompanying written sheets.

The idea that tapes carry the same weight as postgraduate educational material given 'live' seems very sensible to me. It was advertised as a set of 17 audiotapes; unless I have been cheated, there were only 14 in the set I received. However, these covered the material that was advertised. The written material is very helpful because it depicts the slides that would have been used by the speakers; it also has some references and acts as a handout for each talk.

I listened to these tapes in the car and found them stimulating, helpful and challenging. Although I do not necessarily agree with all that was said (and, judging by the questions, neither did the audience necessarily), I feel that this is a very worthwhile way to disseminate up-to-date views that every clinician can assimilate at a convenient rate and place that will allow true CPD. I recommend this approach to all psychiatrists looking for a worthwhile update in the substance misuse field. Please may I have my CPD points!

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