

Book reviews

EDITED BY SIDNEY CROWN and ALAN LEE

Postgraduate Psychiatry: Clinical and Scientific Foundations (2nd edn)

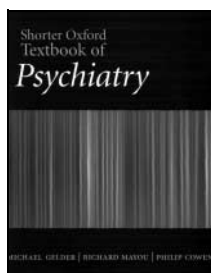
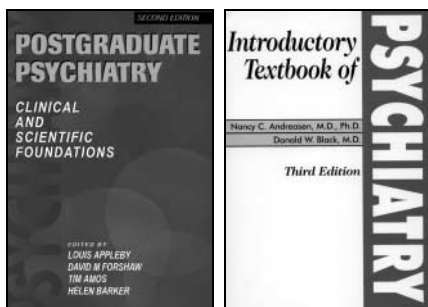
Edited by Louis Appleby, David M. Forshaw, Tim Amos & Helen Barker. London: Arnold. 2001. 592 pp. £35.00 (pb). ISBN 0 340 76377 9

Introductory Textbook of Psychiatry (3rd edn)

By Nancy C. Andreasen & Donald W. Black. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing. 2001. 834 pp. £61.50 (hb), £44.50 (pb). ISBN 0 88048 946 4 (hb); 1 58562 036 X (pb)

Shorter Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry

By Michael Gelder, Richard Mayou & Philip Cowen. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2001. 1056 pp. £39.50 (pb). ISBN 0 19 263241 8



The number of general psychiatry textbooks seems endless, and one wonders what motivates writers, editors and publishers to continue to churn them out. With the advent of easily available and highly topical information through the internet and review journals, and the proliferation of evidence-based and problem-based learning, general textbooks seem less relevant than before.

Despite this, most students and trainees seem keen on having a core textbook to act as a basis for their study, frequently supplemented with smaller, more specialist or 'list' books, which are crammed with information but little else. This state of affairs is reinforced by the all-pervasive influence of membership examinations.

The three textbooks under review each provide the reader with a useful summary of psychiatric knowledge at advanced undergraduate and postgraduate level, but in style and in content they are remarkably different.

Postgraduate Psychiatry, the outsider and least well-known of the three, is an edited text with contributors, as you might expect from its mixed pedigree, coming mainly from Manchester and the Institute of Psychiatry in London. It is wide-ranging in content, but I was left with the impression that it didn't quite know what it wanted to be: a full-length textbook with all that that implies, or a concise handbook providing lists of information but limited in detail. Its focused approach left little room for debate, but trainees looking for straight answers to multiple-choice questions may appreciate this. In appearance, it's a bit utilitarian, with an unattractive and old-fashioned layout. It is firmly centred in the UK and very much geared towards the new syllabus of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' membership examination. Indeed, the appendix includes useful advice on how to approach the examinations. The text tends to provide too much information on UK-specific topics, such as the evolution of UK mental health legislation, to the detriment of more universally relevant concepts such as ethical considerations surrounding compulsory treatment. The chapters on basic sciences, the 'scientific foundations' of the subtitle, are excellent, ensuring that the book is relevant to Part I of the membership examination as well as Part II.

The *Introductory Textbook of Psychiatry* is now in its third edition. It has been expertly coauthored by Andreasen & Black to give a well-written and attractively

produced text that is bursting with information. The scope of the text is remarkably broad, from the historical underpinnings of psychiatry to more recent developments in evaluation and treatment. The inclusion of clinical vignettes and an appendix that provides a range of rating scales and questionnaires adds interest and usefulness. Whole chapters are devoted to topics such as AIDS and laboratory testing (including neuroimaging and neuropsychometry), which mean that the book can be dipped into without much cross-referencing. However, it is not without its problems for the European reader. Just as *Postgraduate Psychiatry* is firmly based in the UK, so this text is very much oriented towards the North American market. Every relevant chapter slavishly lists the DSM-IV-TR criteria for psychiatric syndromes and the chapter on diagnosis and classification barely mentions anything else. European literature and the ICD hardly get a look-in. Not surprisingly, prominence is given to syndromes that are more likely to be diagnosed in North America than anywhere else in the world. For example, dissociative identity disorder ('Cindy had received a diagnosis of multiple personality disorder, although in the past she had received diagnoses of chronic schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, schizoaffective disorder, and bipolar disorder': p. 395) is described without the scepticism seen in the other texts.

I wonder what more can be said about the *Shorter Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry* that hasn't already been said about its predecessors. It is actually the fourth edition of the classic Oxford textbook, its name changed to take into account the publication of its longer and more comprehensive stable-mate, the *New Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry* (Gelder *et al*, 2000). Shorter it may be in name, but it is by far the longest of the three books under review, with more than 1000 pages of text crammed with information in an easy-to-read format. The three authors are supported by a group of expert chapter advisors, which ensures that information is always topical, while consistency of style is maintained. The layout is clear and easy to navigate, and the use of tables, boxes and graphs allows efficient use of space and easy access. It is bang up to date on current talking points such as evidence-based psychiatry and ethics and mental health. The *Shorter Oxford Textbook* is truly balanced, giving equal prominence to ICD and DMS – often with direct

comparisons – and therefore has universal appeal. This will no doubt contribute to the increasing consistency (some might say uniformity) of psychiatric practice worldwide. This book is perfect fodder in preparing for membership examinations – it is comprehensive and relevant, while at the same time being accessible and fluent.

It would appear that, for the time being at least, the textbook is alive and well. In the current three-horse race the clear winner is the *Shorter Oxford Textbook*, with the *Introductory Textbook* a close second.

Gelder, M. G., López-Ibor Jr, J. J. & Andreasen, N. (eds) (2000) *New Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: A Practical Guide

Edited by Naomi Fineberg,
Donatella Marazziti & Dan J. Stein.
London: Martin Dunitz. 2001. 228 pp.
£24.95 (hb). ISBN 1 85317 919 1

In the past few years, the explosion of interest in the aetiology and treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) has led to the publication of several multi-author books on the subject. They all attempt to summarise and integrate an extensive research literature and clinical practice experience. This new book achieves this goal well and really does present a practical approach to evaluation and treatment of the patient with OCD, as well as embedding this knowledge within an authoritative summary of current academic thinking. It perhaps lacks the clinical warmth and immediacy of Koran's book (1999) (although he has a good chapter on quality-of-life issues in this volume), nor does it have the comprehensive research reviews of the 1999 volume edited by Goodman *et al* (Goodman also has a helpful chapter in this book on assessment instruments). Swinson *et al*'s excellent 1998 book now has a 2002 second edition, and the volume edited by Maj *et al* in 2000 is presented in an unusual style, with chapters and linked commentaries. All of these books cover much of the same ground, but for brevity and practicality, Fineberg and colleagues could well be the best choice.

In its 180 or so pages of text (with an additional appendix of useful questionnaires, contacts, etc.), it can be read in one sitting by a clinician wanting to update or to begin work in a new specialist area. Chapters on the biology and pharmacology of OCD take up about half of the book, which realistically reflects the emphasis that there has been on these aspects in current research. Similarly, the most robust evidence for treatment responsiveness is with medication, and the book correctly emphasises how for many patients this remains the mainstay of treatment. There are practical chapters on the use of medication, including the treatment of refractory OCD.

Psychological theory and treatments are not neglected, and although there continues to be sparse clinical trial data on the relative or combined effects of psychological and pharmacological treatment, the case is clearly made for the benefits of cognitive-behavioural therapy. A wide-ranging chapter on the psychotherapies in OCD is not constrained by any particular theoretical framework, but reviews the clinical evidence for efficacy. This is not to dismiss the importance of theory for furthering the field and developing new treatments, and a final chapter on integrated approaches attempts to reconcile the evidence on subcortical/cortical brain dysfunction in OCD with psychological theories of maladaptive risk appraisal and excessive sense of responsibility. Once again, this is done in a 'practical' way, reflecting on the

importance in therapy of an explanatory model with which the patient can engage and experiment.

Although short, this book does not succumb to over-simplified views of OCD. For example, it acknowledges that OCD is likely to be a heterogeneous group of disorders rather than a single disease and that a simplistic 'serotonin-deficit' hypothesis is not likely to be adequately explanatory. This broadness of approach leads the reader through the challenges of treatment, including working with young people and resistant cases. The overall theme of integrating a 'brain-mind' approach in the understanding and treatment of OCD is successfully achieved. For the critical and practical clinician or researcher, wanting to incorporate biological and psychological theories into their thinking and practice in OCD, this book represents an excellent foundation.

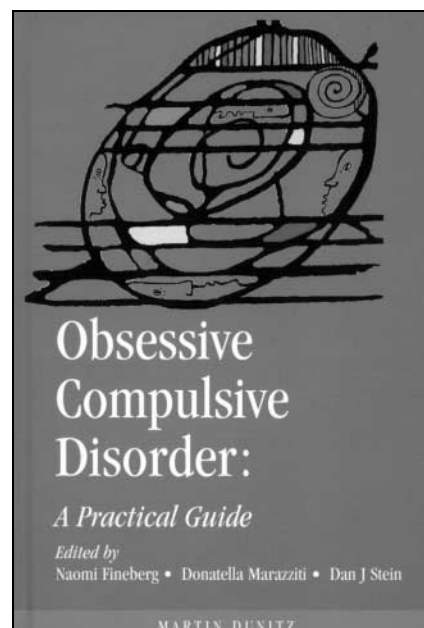
Goodman, W., Rudorfer, M. V. & Maser, J. D. (eds) (1999) *Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder*. Rahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Koran, L. M. (1999) *Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders in Adults*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maj, M. (ed.) (2000) *Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Swinson, R. P., Antony, M. M., Rachman, S., et al (eds) (2002) *Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder*. New York: Guilford Press.

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Mental Health, Race and Culture (2nd edn)

By Suman Fernando. London: Palgrave. 2002. 256 pp. £16.99 (pb). ISBN 0 333 96026 2

The first edition of Suman Fernando's book in 1991 was perhaps the most influential of the 'second wave' of British transcultural psychiatry. Not especially original in sources nor themes, it was nevertheless an outstanding critique of psychiatric practice in the area of ethnicity and race. It resolutely commented on the failures of our profession to provide equal and appropriate treatment for minority ethnic groups, and sustained a vigorous attack on psychiatric diagnoses as presumed entities rather than explanatory models, their being