



produced leaflets are available in many clinical units and leaflets with a wider circulation are freely available online (Table 2).

Other websites

A range of self-help websites and leaflets are increasingly available via the internet (Fig. 1).

Few studies have examined the effectiveness of psychoeducational websites in helping people with depression – however, some studies have found them to be as effective as online CBT (Christensen *et al*, 2004). Most sites at present provide simple information about depression. Two sites in particular offer information and life skills training for people facing low mood and depression: Mood Gym (<http://moodgym.anu.edu.au/>) and Living Life to the Full (www.livinglifetothefull.com).

Conclusion

It is clear that there is an apparently insatiable desire of users and patients to obtain information about depression. This is reflected by the increasing numbers of books and websites that are available. Practitioners are also increasingly offering information leaflets and such approaches are being formalised within clinical services. Such developments may have run ahead of the evidence base and more research in practice is required.

Declaration of interest

C.W. is author of one of the *Overcoming Depression* and *Living Life to the Full* websites.

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Mental Health Law – A Practical Guide

Basant K. Puri, Robert A. Brown, Heather J. McKee, *et al*. London: Hodder Arnold, 2005, £19.99, pp. 254. ISBN: 0-340-88503-3

What a frustrating book. I started the review by thinking of a few examples of questions which are commonly asked on training courses. What is meant by 'mental illness'? Who can be a nominated deputy or send patients on leave? What 'counts' as medication for mental disorder? What is my role in a mental health review tribunal and what makes a good report? I looked for guidance. Unfortunately none of these topics is mentioned let alone

answered. This was my first frustration. The second is that much of the book has little to do with mental health law. There are chapters on drug administration errors, clinical trials, European law in relation to medical qualifications, contractual responsibilities and liability for service provision, and the responsibilities of the Secretary of State under the NHS Act. No doubt all useful material but not what I expected from a book with this title.

Many relevant topics are covered but I was frustrated by the priorities. Chapters on the Children Act, mentally disordered offenders and risk assessment were both interesting and helpful, although I doubt that those who require a very detailed description of Hare's Psychopathy Checklist also need guidance on the categories of mental disorder. Although pleased to see a section on race and culture, why have a table on 'racist incidents in parts of England' rather than one on ethnicity and rates of detention under the Mental Health Act 1983? I was irritated by six pages on the procedures for transferring detained patients around the UK and another six wasted on a transcript of General Medical Council guidance on confidentiality.

A further frustration is the lack of accuracy. The assessment of capacity in relation to medical treatment is discussed three times but the guidance differs on each occasion. Then there are the factual errors. It states that the responsible medical officer can override a request for discharge by the nearest relative by certifying that 'the patient needs to be in hospital' and the list under the heading 'the patient may be discharged by any of the following' omits the mental health review tribunal (although that is mentioned later). A Form 38 completed, as suggested, would not comply with the Code of Practice.

Do not misunderstand me. This book contains a lot of valuable information. I am confident most readers would find much of interest. Another reviewer, and many colleagues, with different expectations, might like the unusual and varied range of material. It just was not what I expected from the title.

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