

field to enrich the sections on epidemiology, the prevention of drug misuse and the law and drug control policies. This is not the text to turn to for a detailed description of the neurobiology of drugs of misuse, or for an account of genetic theories of causation. Furthermore, despite its title, the book does not stray much beyond addiction to prescription and illegal drugs, although the inclusion of a chapter on alcohol is relevant in the current climate. However, when it comes to applying the evidence to the real-life clinical situations that face a psychiatrist working with people who use illegal drugs, this book reaches the parts that a systematic review-driven approach cannot always reach.

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Studies in the Assessment of Parenting

Edited by Peter Reder, Sylvia Duncan & Clare Lucey. Hove: Brunner–Routledge. 2003. 320 pp. £17.95 (pb). ISBN 1 583 91180 4

Studies in the Assessment of Parenting aims to provide a practical guide to professionals who offer expert opinions to the courts in child care cases and to inform day-to-day work in child protection and in enhancing the care of children within their families. Most of the contributors are child and adolescent psychiatrists, but there are chapters by a psychologist, a forensic psychiatrist and a judge. The book is divided into four parts: 'Principles and practice', which offers a framework for assessment, including the problem of cultural matching between assessor and family; 'The child's perspective', in which attachment, significant dimensions of harm, the reliability of child witnesses and the views of children are addressed; 'Assessing parents', which focuses on specific parent groups, for example adolescents, violent individuals and parents with personality disorders; and 'Recommendations', which looks at parental denial, contact arrangements, foster care and adoption, and includes also a chapter in which an experienced judge outlines his

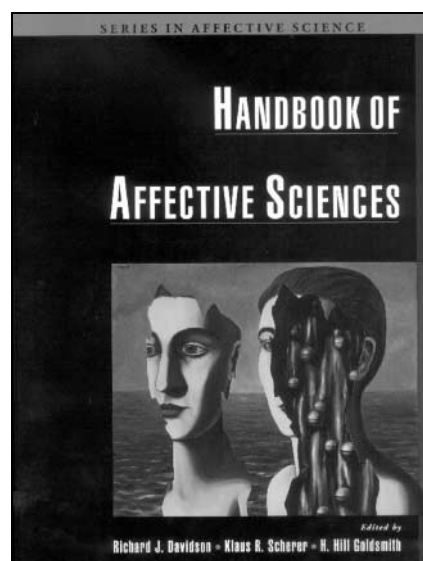
role in weighing up a case and applying the law.

Much will be familiar territory for those working in child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). However, this book will be of value to higher trainees in CAMHS and other professionals new to this area of work. As a general adult psychiatrist increasingly being called upon to offer expert opinion in relation to maternal mental health in child care cases, I found much of it to be helpful and it will be invaluable to adult psychiatry colleagues who find themselves being asked for an expert opinion. However, other than a very good chapter by Christopher Cordess on parents with personality disorder, there is very little detail on parents with mental illness, which is often reduced to the phrase 'underlying psychopathology'. Concentrating on the legal system in England and Wales, the contributors only occasionally refer to equivalent legislation and almost never to alternative processes in other parts of the UK, which makes parts of this book less useful to professionals in those countries.

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Handbook of Affective Sciences

Edited by Richard J. Davidson, Klaus R. Scherer & H. Hill Goldsmith. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2003. 1217 pp. £130.00 (hb). ISBN 0 19 512601 7



This is an outstanding textbook which summarises progress on research in the affective sciences up to about the year 2001. It is a remarkable piece of scholarship and the authors are to be congratulated on having the vision, determination and drive to carry through this project. The individual chapters are well written, but one of the great strengths of the book is that each section is introduced by an overview that draws together the main themes and each has been written with great clarity. There is also evidence of strong editorship in that the volume does not suffer from the usual problems of multi-authored texts with excessive overlap and repetition, and if there are contradictions these are highlighted rather than ignored.

The volume has an excellent introduction which sets the scene and explains the difficult task the authors had in deciding which areas to cover. The introduction contains working definitions of the various phenomena that were targets of enquiry within this handbook (emotions, mood, attitudes, affective style and temperament). The authors make the point that affective science is at the stage that cognitive psychology/neuroscience was at 20 years ago and which is now the most rapidly growing and largest multidisciplinary field in behavioural science today. One can imagine that the publication of this handbook may lead to a similar growth in affective science research.

The book starts with a review of the relevant neuroscience research, followed by accounts of the impact of genetics and development on affect. There are strong sections on the expression and cognitive components of emotion. Finally, the text deals with emotion and affect in their evolutionary, cultural and social contexts as well as their links with 'health' and with 'psychiatry'. Psychiatrists are often uncertain about what psychologists do and are particularly puzzled by the psychology questions in the MRCPsych examinations. Although this volume will not solve the former problem nor provide many answers for the latter, it reveals that conceptually and scientifically psychology research is well advanced and making a real impact on our understanding of complex and ramified topics.

Inevitably with such a large canvas there is some unevenness. I would have liked to have seen a lot more on the genetic underpinnings of emotion and affect but perhaps the editors have given this topic