

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Clinical Handbook of Psychotropic Drugs.** Fifteenth Edition. KZ Bezchlibnyk-Butler, JJ Jeffries. Hogrefe 2005. £59.95. PB. Pp344. ISBN No. 0-88937-293-4.

This book's introduction states that it "is a user-friendly and very practical resource-guide on the use of psychotropic drugs. . . (it) is continually updated. New sections, periodically added, reflect changes in therapy and in current practice". It possesses 344 pages of bulleted lists and tables which, whilst set out in useful and helpful subsections, namely classification, general comments, pharmacology, adverse effects, laboratory tests, paediatric and geriatric considerations, medico-legal issues, nursing implications and patient instructions. Sadly, however, it is difficult to judge the evidence base for some of the recommendations as individual case reports and open trials are difficult to disentangle from robust RCT data. It is like an augmented British National Formulary crossed with product information sheets. I could not escape the feeling that this publication implicitly encouraged polypharmacy and a biological approach to psychiatric disorders.

There are 57 pages of detailed and useful patient leaflets in which an attempt is made to weigh the frequency of side-effects. There are 9 pages on new unapproved treatments for psychiatric disorders, 6 pages on herbal and natural products, a mere 5 pages of references and a three-page glossary for nurses, paramedics and, I suspect, patients who will no doubt figure largely amongst the readers of this book. There would also appear to be the suggestion that all readers would be expected to purchase the new edition each year!

The dust jacket of the book describes it as "phenomenal...invaluable...", I would add entertaining and a little bit disconcerting. Amongst its pages you will find the recommendation of augmenting antidepressants with amphetamines in the treatment of resistant depression; the correct dose for dextroamphetamine in a three year old and sadly it would appear that barbiturates continue to be prescribed for insomnia in North America. The use of contentious therapies such as Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) herbal and other extracts provide some entertaining reading.

I found it difficult to assess the robustness of the recommendations and the use of bulleted text throughout added to this difficulty. It would appear that, in company with many other North American publications, nearly everything is given equal weight and it was hard at times not to become irritated at the

amount of information presented in such a nonstructured way. Despite its shortcomings, the information contained within this book is helpful, particularly after having decided which drug to prescribe. It would also be useful for GPs when confronted with a new drug as it gives more information than the BNF and slightly less than a product information leaflet.

I cannot see it replacing the Maudsley Prescribing Guidelines for psychiatrists on this side of the Atlantic and if anything, having read this text, I will be less inclined to reach for my prescription pad!

From an occupational medicine point of view this book is an aid to have available on the consulting room desk as hard copy in binder format. Workers of all types require psychiatric or neuropsychiatric treatment from time to time, and especially on their return to the workplace it is essential for their occupational physician to know the properties of the medications which they are taking. This consideration becomes absolutely crucial whenever such workers return to safety critical duties of any sort e.g. medical or nursing personnel returning to high dependency arenas of patient care. Although North America nomenclature is used throughout the book this would be an advantage in dealing with an international workforce – perhaps when deployed on humanitarian operations. The sections on bright lights therapy (DLT) for seasonal affective disorder and repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) are reminders of treatments which patients in work may be receiving, as is the section on herbal and natural products.

All in all a publication to be recommended whenever easy to follow cross-referencing on the properties of psychotropic drugs is required.

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**Head Injury – Pathophysiology And Management. 2nd Edition.** Reilly and Bullock Hodder Arnold 2005. £155.00 HB. ISBN No. 0-340-807-245.

Head injuries are a major problem world-wide. Both blunt head injuries, frequently caused by motor vehicle accidents, as well as penetrating head injuries from urban violence and military conflict, are increasing and are a major burden to society.

This book is divided into three sections. The first deals with the fundamental concepts of the pathophysiology of brain injury. The second covers methods of evaluating and monitoring brain injury. The third section of particular interest to the clinician, covers all aspects of treatment based logically on the pathophysiology previously described.

The military surgeon will find of particular interest the excellent chapter 'missile wounds of the head'. Current surgical management is controversial but clear guidelines are laid down; the uncomplicated small entry wound needs superficial debridement only, whereas the extensive brain injury with retained bone fragments still needs careful wound excision and watertight closure.

This book is beautifully presented with clear line drawings and in some cases colour photographs. More importantly it covers the subject in great detail and provides an excellent source of reference. It should be on every neurosurgeon's personal bookshelf and be freely available to any clinician concerned with the management of head injuries.

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**Movies and Mental Illness. Second Revised and Expanded Edition.** D Wedding, M A Boyd. R M Niemiec Hogrefe 2005. £22.95 PB. Pp 258. ISBN No. 0-88937-292-6.

This second edition of what is clearly a well-constructed and well thought out didactic text reminds the reader of the long standing, perhaps eternal, association between the arts and mental illness through the medium of the moving image. Although not yet at the technological and budgetary stage where the reader can purchase the text with an iPod or other electronic receptacle from which the films described can be viewed (perhaps that will come with future editions) the authors clearly have achieved much in their teaching of psychiatry by using a synopsis of the particular film in relation to the psychopathology to be covered.

Disorders covered in successive chapters by reference to appropriate film material include Anxiety, Dissociative and Somatoform, Psychological Stress and Physical Disorders, Mood, Personality, Substance Misuse, Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders together with Schizophrenia, Delusional Disorders, Neuropsychological Disorders and Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence. Chapters on Sleep, Eating and Sexual Abuse Disorders together with a section on Treatments round off the book. Appendices include the American Film

Institute's List of 100 Best Films of 100 Years, the same Institute's List of the Top 50 Heroes and Villains, and an Internet Movie Database together with a number of website addresses. These introduce the reader to areas of teaching material which I suspect all but the most anoraked film-buff will find both novel and interesting.

Certainly this is a book which any reference medical library should have on its shelves. I venture to suggest that it would also be a good text to include in one's Bergen before deploying on military operations, provided that a functioning video library and viewer await one in theatre. The book certainly lives up to its claim to introduce "the portrayal of mental health issues in movies" and its style makes for easy reading. As John Milton tells us in "Paradise Lost" we must – in all areas of life – "strike the visual nerve for we have much to see".

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### **Counselling Victims of Warfare.**

Richard Bryant-Jefferies. Radcliffe 2005. £19.95. Pp vi-191. ISBN No. 1-85775-721-1.

This book is particularly useful for individuals who feel attracted to, comfortable with and keen on Rogerian Non-directive or Patient-Centred Therapy; it does not suit all cases or therapists. If approached with an open mind, there are interesting and useful insights within its covers. Two 'Forwards' might act to alienate some military readers and the author's discussions about the validity of the diagnosis of PTSD will not sit well with many mental health professionals, either civilian or military.

I laud its focus on putting the patient at the centre of the therapeutic endeavour and developing that most vital of all components of psychotherapy, the therapeutic relationship and alliance. This is particularly important in any therapy with service personnel. I am pleased to see the author paying attention to the particular importance of an individual's military, as opposed to civilian, experience and post-traumatic growth which he describes as reported in ... closer relationships, improved perception of self and changed philosophies of life. This statement comes on the back of the key observation that not everyone is traumatised by trauma, ... trauma is an event and the process of being traumatised does not necessarily follow [exposure to such events]. I was particularly taken with the statement that they (soldiers) do not need prejudicial and judgemental attitudes from peace-loving therapists. The war veteran does need honest, matter-of-fact,

person-to-person relationship. The importance of getting the relationship right cannot be stressed enough.

The style of the book will not suit everyone's taste. Its depiction of the patient centred approach can read quite awkwardly if the reader has little experience of this style of working. Although one of the two case histories is a military man, I do not think that this book will persuade many military mental health professionals to seek an in-depth training in this school of thought. However, it is worth reading particularly what the individual patients found useful and the benefits they derived from such an approach. I believe that all forms of psychotherapy should be Person centred and this short book is a useful addition particularly for those seeking training in counselling.

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**Neuroglycobiology.** M Fekuda, U Rütisauer, R Schnaar. Oxford University Press 2005. Pp 1-229. HB £49.50  
ISBN No. 0-19-852538-9.

I feel somewhat ill qualified to review this book. However, I have never met a doctor who is a specialist in this area and so the reader's indulgence is craved. This is a specialist book. A book written by, and for, specialists in an extremely refined area of neuro-biochemical research. It is not a book for light reading and a thorough grounding in cutting-edge molecular and neurochemistry would appear to be a prerequisite to even start to understand about 95% of its contents.

It will introduce the reader into the delights of the roles of polysialic acid and HNK-1 sulfated glycans apparently enriched in the brain and determined by utilization of key glycosyltransferases; proteoglycan sulfotransferases the roles of which, within the brain, are as yet unclear or unknown. It will introduce you to the availability of 'gene inactivation by homologous recombination' in the so called 'knockout-mouse' and an awareness of the importance of these glycoproteins in the development of embryos and orthogenesis.

Most of the book's eight chapters were completely incomprehensible to me. It took me until page 199 before I could read with some understanding. This (last) chapter focuses on the lysosomal storage diseases such as Neimann-Pick, Metachromatic Leukodystrophy, Gauchers and Fabry's Disease of which there are apparently 40 genetically different forms with a collective frequency of one in 800 live births. Everything you could ever wish to know about their genesis is described in this chap-

ter, however, anything other than a superficial reading required remembrance of more biochemistry that I could muster.

I cannot recommend it to any busy clinician; but it must, of course, be on the bookshelf of any respecting researcher into the neurochemical wonders of the brain. I must also pay tribute to all the poor wee mice involved in this, what I take, or would take if I understood it, to be a worthwhile endeavour.

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**Diving And Subaquatic Medicine.** Carl Edmonds, Christopher Lowry, John Pennefather, Robyn Walker. 4th Ed. Hodder Arnold 2005. £40.00  
PB. Pp ix-703. ISBN No. 0-340-80629-X

While reviewing this book during a weekend of DIY, I began to think that I should plan a diving holiday despite the disorders this book describes. This is the paperback version of the fourth edition and so is more ambulatory. The book comes from an established group of authors with a credible background in diving medicine both within the Australian Navy and at the Diving Medical Centre in Sydney. With the wealth that the southern hemisphere has to offer in diving experience, it is not surprising that there is also a wide spectrum of environmental and zoological hazards to detail.

The text is easy to follow with well illustrated diagrams, including the sections on the physics of diving. Although the main body of the book is black and white, there are some coloured plates especially useful for the clinical slides. The 70 chapters make this an ideal book for referring to during aquatic and academic emergencies. The chapters are sensibly grouped into sections that make the book a useful edition to anybody studying this field of medicine either for occupational or recreational diving. Written by Australian authors, there is reference to work both in the United Kingdom and the United States. However, there may not be enough detail for occupational diving physicians who will need to cross-reference with national regulatory standards and requirements. There is often reference to the US Dive Tables for the treatment of decompression sickness and this may differ to recompression protocols in some institutions. Other applications of hyperbaric medicine are appropriately beyond the scope of this book, which focuses on the wide range of diving related ailments that are often overlooked.

As well as the more serious conditions of decompression illness and barotraumas, the authors highlight a number of "aquatic disorders" from local infections, trauma from

marine creatures (especially poignant with the 30th anniversary of the original Jaws movie!), marine envenomations and psychological problems. There is even a section for landlubbers on seafood poisoning and any reader that may be taken down with après-sea D&V. The final section of the book, and one of the reasons for the fourth edition, covers the issues resulting from the expansion of the diving industry. This section includes specialist types of diving (free divers) and specialised diving groups such as the handicapped.

Overall this is an excellent, new edition of a well-established textbook. It will be useful as a standalone book for those with an interest in diving medicine and as an addition to the bookshelf of an occupational physician or diving specialist, whether medical or non-medical.

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