
Council Reports

Organophosphate sheep dip. Clinical aspects of long-term low-dose exposure. Report of a joint working party of the Royal College of Physicians and Royal College of Psychiatrists. CR67. 1998. 54 pp. £12.50. ISBN 1 86016 080 8

Organophosphate pesticides are used widely for treating crops and farm animals (e.g. in dipping sheep), and are associated with a variety of symptoms in those who use them either intermittently or continuously. Acute exposure to organophosphates is known to cause neurological syndromes. However, the mechanism whereby low-dose organophosphates might cause reported symptoms such as cognitive impairment, psychiatric morbidity and minor sensory changes is presently unknown. Such uncertainty has led to inadequate management and to the perception by many sufferers that they are not taken seriously.

This report, commissioned by the Department of Health, includes evidence given by patients, patient groups, and doctors, and analyses the clinical symptoms they describe and which they have attributed to working with organophosphate sheep dip. An account of the toxicology of organophosphate pesticides and toxic syndromes is also included.

Extensive recommendations are made for the management and diagnosis of symptoms, improved patient facilities and for further research. A bibliography covers most of the literature on what is known about organophosphate pesticide-related symptoms and similar symptoms not necessarily related to exposure to organophosphates. It is hoped that this report will bring some clarity and objectivity to this contentious area of medicine with consequent help to those who suffer.

The care of older people with mental illness: specialist services and medical training. Report of a joint working party of the Royal College of Physicians and Royal College of Psychiatrists. CR69. 1999. 40 pp. £7.50

This report celebrates achievements since the original 1989 joint report, in particular the recognition of old age psychiatry as a speciality

in its own right. It reviews progress on the recommendations of the original report. Aimed at a wide group of potential readers, including commissioners of services for older people, it discusses demographic trends and the main types of mental illness in old age. Largely written before the recent NHS White paper, *The New NHS: Modern and Dependable*, it anticipates many of its themes including the need for a 'national reference framework' similar in concept to the *National Service Framework* which is a core concept in the White Paper.

The Report's main recommendations are that:

- (a) Every health district should have a fully resourced old age psychiatry service by 2002.
- (b) There should be greater public accountability of service commissioners and providers.
- (c) Commissioners should be aware of different options, have access to appropriate data and be ready to learn from examples of good practice.
- (d) There should be a national reference framework against which commissioners and the public can compare local practice and standards.
- (e) Specific attention should be paid to the needs of vulnerable groups of old people.
- (f) The health of older people should be a key area for public health policy and within this key area mental health targets should be set.
- (g) Basic and applied research into mental illness in later life need to be fostered by training, recruitment, resources and the removal of impediments.
- (h) Training for all professionals involved in services for older people with mental illness should be provided at all levels including continuing professional development.

The panel which wrote this report was more broad-based than the group of physicians and psychiatrists that wrote the original report and included managers, a nurse and representatives of voluntary agencies. It took advice from a wider group including psychologists and an epidemiologist. This breadth is reflected in an emphasis on inter-agency and multi-disciplinary working.

Council Reports are available from the College by mail or telephone order. Cheques should be made payable to The Royal College of Psychiatrists at 17 Belgrave Square, Lon-

don SW1X 8PG. Further information and telephone orders to Lee Butler: 0171 232 2351 ext. 146 (please quote the CR number where possible).

Council Report CR68 Behavioural and Cognitive Treatments



These guidelines were first published by the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 1989 following public concern about the use of behavioural methods in certain institutional settings. The forthcoming revised version includes the previous recommendations and is updated to take account of new approaches and techniques developed since 1989.

Amongst the issues considered are consent of the patient to treatment, and the use of behavioural and cognitive treatments with children and those with chronic mental illness, learning difficulties and dementia.

CR68, £5.00, January 1999

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