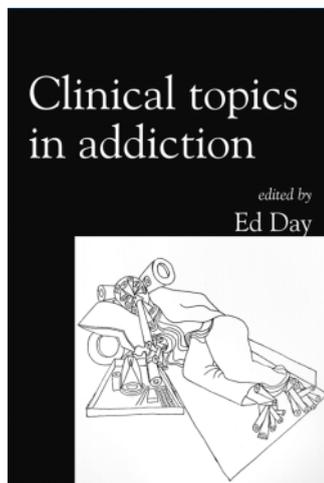


Book reviews

Edited by Allan Beveridge, Femi Oyeboode
and Rosalind Ramsay



Clinical Topics in Addiction

Edited by Ed Day
RCPsych Publications. 2007.
428pp. £25.00 (pb).
ISBN 9781904671503

The past 20 years have seen considerable changes in the pattern of drug and alcohol misuse and dependence in the UK. The number of individuals experiencing difficulties with these substances has increased markedly with affluence, changes in social ethos and the availability of both licit and illicit drugs. Following from this, there has been recognition of the importance of treatment in reducing the harms associated with drug and alcohol misuse and dependence.

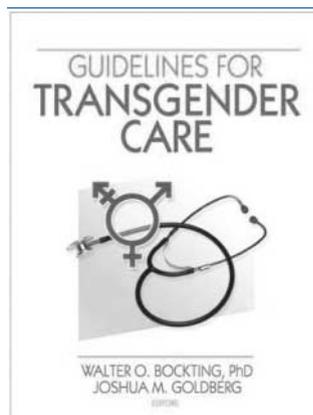
Day *et al* have produced a very useful guide to the assessment and treatment of such disorders incorporating both UK and international evidence and guidance. The basis is a series of articles published in *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment* and most of the significant topics are covered in this book. The information is well presented and easily accessible, with extensive referencing to facilitate further reading if required.

Like all edited books there is variability in quality between chapters, which I think is unavoidable and has been well managed by Day as editor. My only other criticism is that some topics are not covered in great depth such as contingency management (now recommended by National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines), criminal justice intervention programmes and emerging substances of misuse such as methamphetamine and GHB. Again, this is perhaps unavoidable in a book of this size.

I would recommend *Clinical Topics in Addiction* to any clinician who has to deal with such problems; not just for the addiction specialists, but also for other psychiatric specialities and doctors in general practice surgeries.

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doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.107.047118



Guidelines for Transgender Care

Edited by Walter O. Bockting and
Joshua M. Goldberg. Haworth
Medical Press. 2007. 240pp.
US\$95.00 (pb). ISBN
9780789036117

The final chapter of this book might well have been the first. It provides the rationale for the compilation of these articles, the purpose of which is to offer training to community-based clinicians involved in transgender treatment. In 2003 the Gender Dysphoria Program at Vancouver Hospital was replaced by a community approach: hence the need for a training initiative. Each chapter covers separate areas, such as physical and mental health assessment, hormonal treatment, the 'real-life experience' and surgical interventions. The authors succeed admirably in their ambition and provide technical information of the type needed by a general practitioner (GP), mental health worker or general psychiatrist. Although the book is written for a North American audience, it is relevant to the UK setting. Increasingly, commissioners require patients to be assessed by their local mental health team before their GP can make a referral to a gender identity clinic. This book provides the basic information needed to carry out the initial assessment and will help the generalist understand the issues associated with hormonal and other treatments.

The strength of a compilation of this sort is the ability to dip in and out as needed. The weakness is the frequent repetition of basic facts. It is unfortunate that the authors do not follow their own three-tiered approach to training when organising the content of the book. Had they done so, it would be easier to use the book more effectively in a clinical setting. It is tantalising in its reference to some of the core dilemmas in offering treatment to people with gender dysphoria not least among which is whether it represents a disorder in the usual psychiatric sense. Many transgendered people reject this assumption and question why it is not treated in the same way as sexual orientation or accepted as a variant of the human condition just as valid as any other. Adopting that approach would leave little room for National Health Service involvement with no role for the psychiatrist or psychologist, the two disciplines accounting for the majority of specialists in the UK.

Although the book makes reference to various ethical dilemmas, the authors do not tackle them in any great depth. This is unfortunate as it is these very issues that can prevent a health-care worker giving the most appropriate help to transgendered people (referred to as transphobia). Other ideas are raised briefly without explanation; a discussion of the nature of the 'multi-gendered' would be most welcome. Similarly, they refer to complicating scenarios where the patient may suffer personality disorder or learning difficulty but seem to leave resolution of these issues to the 'experts'.