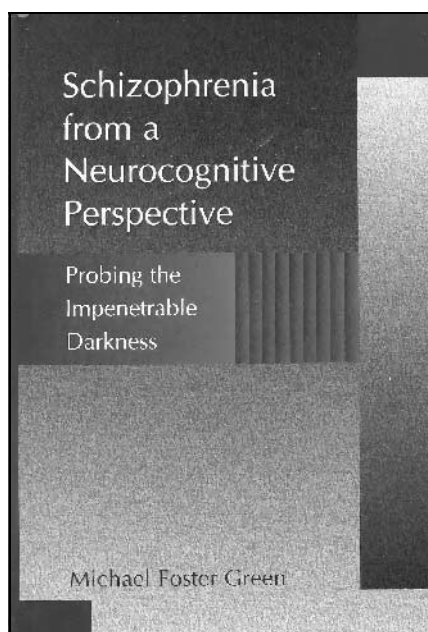


## Book reviews

EDITED BY SIDNEY CROWN and ALAN LEE

### Schizophrenia from a Neurocognitive Perspective: Probing the Impenetrable Darkness

By Michael Foster Green. Massachusetts, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1999. 190 pp. US\$59.00 (hb). ISBN 0-205-184-77-4



There is a vast amount of literature on schizophrenia, including scientific papers, medical case histories and numerous books. Much of this leaves the reader feeling confused by the lack of consistency in the experimental results and pessimistic about the likelihood of developing a consensus regarding the origins of schizophrenia. This new book is refreshing in its coherence and optimism. Green pursues the few clues to the aetiology of schizophrenia that have emerged from research, and uses them to construct a theory in which he considers the illness primarily in terms of neurocognitive processes. Neurocognitive deficits, such as memory, attentional and executive problems, are common in schizophrenia, but are normally considered peripheral to the primary symptoms. Green argues that neurocognitive deficits might in fact contribute to the primary symptoms and prognosis of the illness. This is a new, and

intriguing, way of considering schizophrenia.

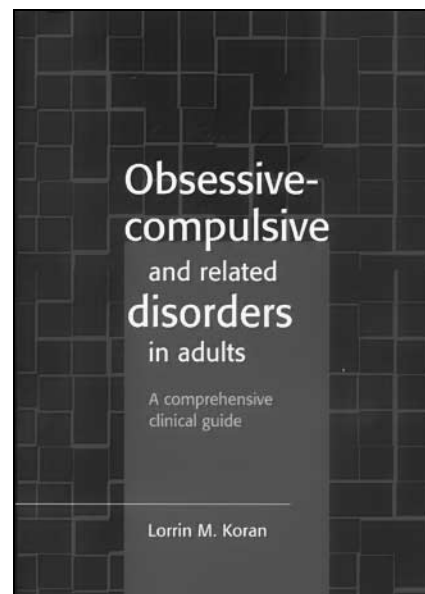
The book is exceptionally well written, in a style that is original and succinct. Green reviews the long history and complicated findings of research on schizophrenia by evaluating a number of exemplar paradigms in detail, rather than giving an exhaustive account of all the literature. The reader learns about research techniques and methodological principles, such as study groups and ecological validity, through worked examples of experiments. The author conveys complicated concepts and experimental results in a readable and interesting way, driven throughout by his own argument. An example comes early on in the book, when Green introduces a model proposed by researchers at UCLA to account for vulnerability factors in schizophrenia. The model is thorough, incorporating several factors that might make someone vulnerable to schizophrenia, such as dopaminergic dysfunction together with a stressful life event, and several factors that might act as protectors, such as coping strategies and effective family problem solving. The model is original in that it identifies specific neurocognitive processes as the link between vulnerability and protective factors and outcome for the patient. Despite the complexity of the model, Green conveys the ideas in a style that is comprehensive and persuasive.

Green writes for a broad spectrum of readers, “anyone who has a firm grounding in the basics of physiological psychology and psychopathology”. The implications of his theory for the functional outcome and treatment of patients with schizophrenia, covered in the final two chapters, is the book’s ultimate strength. The use of relevant and interesting quotations and illustrations lights up the text, depicting each point cleverly and making this fascinating theory a very enjoyable read.

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### Obsessive–Compulsive and Related Disorders in Adults: A Comprehensive Clinical Guide

Lorrin M. Koran. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 361 pp. £34.95 (pb). ISBN 0-521-55975-8



Those unfamiliar with Hollander’s concept of obsessive–compulsive spectrum disorders (Hollander, 1993) will be pleasantly surprised by the content of this excellent book. After the expected chapters dealing in depth with obsessive–compulsive disorders (OCD) are ones devoted separately to each of 12 so-called spectrum disorders, from the largely compulsive (harm or risk avoiding) hypochondriasis and body dysmorphic disorder to those characterised by damaging impulsivity, such as pathological gambling. The author, Professor of Psychiatry at Stanford University, points out the pitfalls of this largely phenomenologically based association, but adopts it none the less as “primarily a stimulus to basic and clinical research”. He advocates that clinicians and investigators with a special interest in any one of the spectrum disorders expand their expertise to others. The ability to reach a functional understanding of compulsive (or impulsive) behaviours and to choose between or combine serotonergic agents and cognitive–behavioural therapy are essentials for any such specialist. Koran clearly has this expertise and comes across as an experienced and astute clinician.

The initial sections deal with OCD. There is a concise and interesting historical review, authoritative discussions of epidemiology, classification and aetiology and particularly helpful passages on differential

diagnosis and comorbidity (including a chapter on presentations of OCD with schizophrenia). The extensive discussion of clinical management may focus too much for some readers on pharmacological treatments, with an exhaustive list of as yet unproven augmentation strategies for use with serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SRIs). Candidates discussed include buspirone, clonazepam, lithium, L-tryptophan and parenteral clomipramine. Comprehensive and very welcome advice on managing side-effects of SRIs, including their use in pregnancy, is presented in a separate chapter with relevance beyond OCD. Psychotherapeutic interventions are summarised well, although not dealt with in sufficient depth to guide a clinician inexperienced in these techniques – the book's only major weakness.

The chapters on related disorders, some of which have yet to be incorporated into standard classification (e.g. skin picking and compulsive buying), are invaluable summaries of up-to-date research and current best practice. The phenomenology of each is clearly discussed. For example, in primary kleptomania the distinction is made between the impulsive, unplanned aspects of stealing and its emotional/behavioural function, which is often compulsive, i.e. resisted with increasing anxiety, seen as irrational and wrong by the individual (ego-dystonic) and carried out to relieve tension rather than to obtain pleasure.

Although written from an American perspective this book is aimed at a global readership, with helpful appendices detailing important contacts in countries throughout the world, from support groups and sources of educational material (including websites) to neurosurgical centres. Some widely used rating scales are also included.

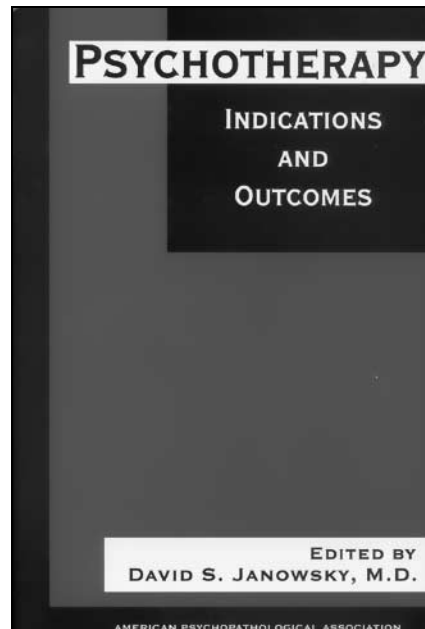
I found myself returning again and again to this text for guidance on a range of clinical issues and rarely found it lacking. It is an essential and not excessively priced addition to the personal library of any clinician with special interest in this area and should be made available to all those working in general psychiatric settings.

**Hollander, E. (ed.) (1993)** *Obsessive-Compulsive Related Disorders*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

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### Psychotherapy: Indications and Outcomes

Edited by David S. Janowsky. Washington, DC:  
American Psychiatric Press, 1999. 414 pp.  
£49.95 (hb). ISBN 0-88048-761-5



This edited collection of conference papers covers a wide range of topics within the domains of psychotherapy process, outcome and process-outcome research. It contains 17 chapters in eight sections devoted to: individual and interpersonal determinants of psychotherapeutic effects (four papers first authored by Luborsky, Blatt, Janovsky and Shea); dialectical-behaviour therapy (Linehan); cognitive-behavioural therapy (Biggs, Shaw and Agras); interpersonal therapy: mechanisms and efficacy (Weissman, Markowitz and Spanier); psychotherapy with the medically ill (Spiegel); family therapies (Glick and Goldstein); methodological considerations in psychotherapy research (Hollon and Goldstein); and psychotherapy in the era of managed care (Sharfstein).

The broad coverage of a wealth of important research fields and the impeccable pedigree of the authorship must establish this as a potentially important source text for psychotherapy researchers. Whether it will be of more general value to clinicians who want to be updated on developments in a rapidly moving research field is less clear. The papers presented in this volume were all first given at a conference of the American Psychopathological Association in early 1996. Although

the authors have clearly been given the opportunity to update their contributions, the extent to which they have done so is variable. While some (e.g. Linehan) have included reference to more recent published material, others appear to have left their papers largely untouched, with the result that their interest will rapidly become historical.

Despite this, there are several interesting and useful contributions. One such example is Luborsky *et al's* paper. This establishes the applicability of the Alice in Wonderland dodo's verdict ("All have won and all shall have prizes") to comparative outcome research on the psychodynamic therapies, and examining the range of possible explanations for the equivalence paradox (i.e. that widely differing therapies often appear to yield similar results). Another is the detailed check-list offered by Donald Klein for developing and evaluating treatment in psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy. Where high-quality comparative outcome research is concerned, however, there is not much in this book that was not already available in Roth *et al's* *What Works for Whom?* (1996). Moreover, much has happened in this field since, as a cursory inspection of the relevant 1998 Special Section of the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* will reveal.

In summary, had this book appeared in early 1997 it would have made an outstanding and original contribution to the research literature available at that time, offering a synthesis of key contemporary developments. Its value today is less, but still substantial. It has been estimated that clinicians wishing to adopt an evidence-based approach to their clinical practice would need to read an average of 19 papers a day, 365 days a year to keep up with the published literature in any major speciality. The enormity of this task underlines the key importance of reviews and syntheses of relevant research. This edited collection is one such; perhaps not the first I would head for if I could have only one, but still a candidate for a place on my bookshelf.

**Roth, A., Fonagy, P., Kazdin, A. E., et al (1996)** *What Works for Whom?* New York: Guilford.

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