

Book reviews

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Symptoms in the Mind. An Introduction to Descriptive Psychopathology (3rd edn)

By Andrew Sims. London: Elsevier. 2002.
451 pp. £29.99 (pb).
ISBN 0 7020 2627 1

This splendid book is welcome in its third edition. It will stimulate, enlighten and refresh anyone who works in the field of mental health. The aim of this readable and inviting work is to improve diagnosis, to share knowledge in dealings with doctors and lawyers, and to improve the care given.

Andrew Sims (who now has a centre named after him at the University of Leeds) has a vast clinical experience, informed by many links with past classical writers; a sense of continuity with the humanities and medicine results. He covers the wide range of symptoms which are met in psychiatry deftly, with wit and learning. His chapters, like Ariadne's thread, will guide one through many a maze. The international classification systems ICD-10 and DSM-IV are explained without tedious repetition. It is a pleasure to find a chapter on the psychopathology of pain; and the chapter on personality disorders is a model of what is needed.

The chapter on insight deals with the cultural and social aspects that have led some to question its value. Developments in neuroscience or clinical psychology have necessitated updates; Sims has made much of taking the patient's history: now 'narrative' is welcome. Reviewers have praised the thoroughness of the references; however, multiple personality and possession syndromes might merit two more: Ian Hacking's *Rewriting the Soul* (Hacking, 1998) and I. M. Lewis's *Ecstatic Religion* (Lewis, 2002).

The book is well produced, and I found few errors. Every library should have this new edition, and I hope many individuals will also invest in it and enjoy using it.

Hacking, I. (1998) *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lewis, I. M. (2002) *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit*. London: Routledge.

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The Epidemiology of Schizophrenia

Edited by Robin M. Murray, Peter B. Jones,
Ezra Susser, Jim van Os & Mary Cannon.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2003. 470 pp. £55 (hb). ISBN 0 521 77540 X

This is a multi-authored work, with 39 contributors from various European countries, Australia and the USA; it provides a cohesive, well-structured overview of the current state of affairs in the epidemiology of schizophrenia, readable by both specialists and informed lay readers.

The book is organised into five parts. The first discusses the social epidemiology of schizophrenia, including socio-environmental

issues such as geographical variation in incidence between developing and developed countries, the declining incidence of schizophrenia and the elevated risk of this disorder in urban areas and in immigrant groups. Fundamentals of social epidemiology – for example, the discrimination between age, period and cohort effects – are outlined in a clear and non-technical way.

Developmental epidemiology, defined by the authors as 'the study of early antecedents and risk factors for adult-onset illness', is addressed in part 2, which provides an overview of prenatal and perinatal risk factors, childhood development factors, prodromal signs and early course, the value of first-episode studies, and extreme age of onset schizophrenia (very early or very late). Part 3 introduces the genetic epidemiology of schizophrenia, beginning with an overview of 'classical' genetic epidemiology, including an outline of model-fitting procedures to quantify genetic components. One of the questions discussed is whether the genetic predisposition is for the syndrome in isolation or for schizotypal traits in the general population. However, many other questions remain unresolved. The application of epidemiological principles in genetic research, as is argued in the second chapter of part 3, can be helpful in making more progress in this area. The final two chapters of this part discuss the gene-environment interaction, including the contribution of neuroimaging studies. In part 4 a number of special issues are presented, including mortality, suicide, substance misuse, and criminal violent behaviour. In part 5, future directions and emerging issues are outlined; these include discussion about the categorical *v.* the dimensional nature of psychosis. The final two chapters discuss the role of epidemiology in service planning, and the possibilities of primary prevention strategies.

In this book the findings of various disciplines in the epidemiology of schizophrenia are integrated. Leading scientists in each discipline present and discuss the key findings and provide guidelines for future research, making it a valuable contribution to this field of study, for both clinicians and researchers.

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