

Book reviews

EDITED BY SIDNEY CROWN, FEMI OYEBODE and ROSALIND RAMSAY

The Overlap of Affective and Schizophrenic Spectra

Edited by Andreas Marneros
& Hagop S. Akiskal. Cambridge University
Press. 2007. 299pp. £65.00 (hb).
ISBN 0521858585



If this book is not of interest, the reader has no business being a psychiatrist.

The official classifications, ICD-10 and DSM-IV, that psychiatrists are currently required to use are sets of descriptive categories that were designed to provide clinicians and researchers with a reasonably reliable language to aid communication and decision-making. Developed from the opinions of committees of experts rather than on the basis of useful data regarding aetiology and pathogenesis, the categories are essentially a modified version of the basic dichotomous scheme proposed by Kraepelin at the end of the 19th century. As has been argued in editorials within this journal, there is an ever-increasing and progressively more robust body of data that demonstrates the need for modern psychiatry to free itself from a historically based dichotomous classification and move towards approaches that recognise alternative

diagnostic entities that more closely reflect the illnesses of our patients (Craddock & Owen, 2005; Marneros, 2006; Angst, 2007).

This book approaches mood and psychotic disorders from such an alternative perspective, namely considering clinical spectra of affective and schizophrenic symptomatology that may overlap within the same individuals either at the same or at different times during life. The editors are well-known for their work in this area. There are 14 chapters that deal with a broad range of clinical, biological and psychological issues using a spectrum approach. The authors of these chapters include leaders in the field who have published important data and theoretical papers that examine the overlap in mood and psychotic symptomatology beyond the traditional schizophrenia/mood disorder categories. The book is well written and provides an excellent accessible overview of relevant research.

If psychiatry is to translate the opportunities offered by new research methodologies into benefits for patients, we must move to a classificatory approach that is worthy of the 21st century. This book provides a wealth of useful, clinically relevant information that will be of interest to any reader who accepts the importance of taking account of a patient's illness beyond simple allocation to an operational diagnostic category. All psychiatrists involved in the management of individuals with mood and psychotic illnesses should read this book.

Angst, J. (2007) The bipolar spectrum. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **190**, 189–191.

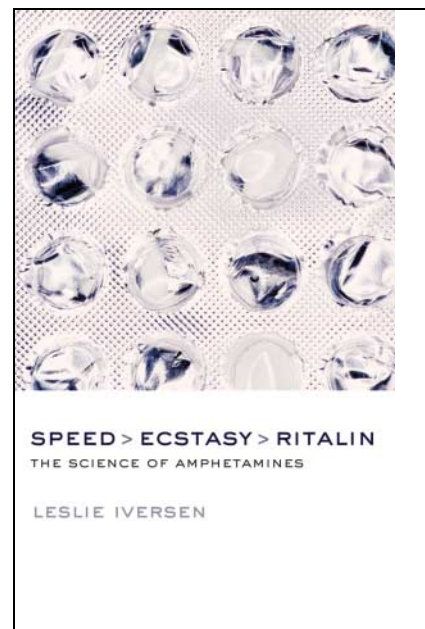
Craddock, N. & Owen M. J. (2005) The beginning of the end for the Kraepelinian dichotomy. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **186**, 364–366.

Marneros, A. (2006) Beyond the Kraepelinian dichotomy: acute and transient psychotic disorders and the necessity for clinical differentiation. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **189**, 1–2.

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Speed, Ecstasy and Ritalin: The Science of Amphetamines

By Leslie Iversen. Oxford University Press.
2006. 222pp. £24.95 (hb). ISBN 0198530897



The 2005/06 British Crime Survey estimated that ecstasy and amphetamines were the third and fourth (after cannabis and cocaine) most widely used illicit drugs among 16- to 59-year-olds (by 1.6% and 1.3% respectively) in England and Wales. More worryingly, among 16- to 24-year-olds the corresponding figures increased to 4.3% and 3.3%. There are also fears of an emerging epidemic of illicit methamphetamine (crystal meth or ice) misuse in the UK, resulting in its recent reclassification from Class B to Class A under the Misuse of Drugs Act 2005. So, too, methylphenidate and dexamphetamine were recognised by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2006) as appropriate treatment options for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents. Amphetamine dependence, as part of polysubstance dependence, its many psychiatric complications (depression, anxiety, psychosis, etc.) and dual diagnosis are not uncommon presentations in psychiatric practice. It is in view of all of the above that this book is timely and relevant to clinicians, addiction scientists, drug policy makers and the public.

Leslie Iversen (a distinguished pharmacologist) presents an overview of the 'positive and negative aspects of amphetamines