

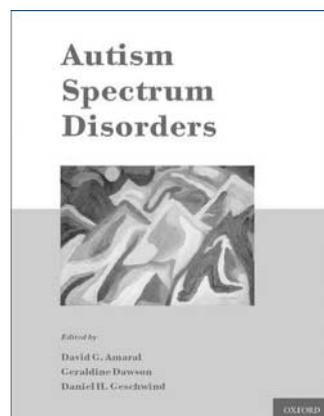
based on their experiences; and the evolutionary function of music. Unwilling to play down the evolutionary advantages of many facets of adolescence our profession would sometimes seek to pathologise, these encyclopedic entries are deftly edited, ever careful to draw the reader's attention to related material in other entries, broadening and extending our collective understanding. There are some surprises; for instance, I was not expecting to learn that the evidence for the benefits of high self-esteem is very weak.

If I had to choose one chapter for you to dip into, to be convinced of this work's quality, it would be the chapter on creativity in adolescence. In this chapter, the four strands of adolescent creativity – personal dimension, creative process, creative product and environment – can be seen as leitmotifs for the rest of this volume. Similarly, the entries on why adolescents develop motivational systems and studies on risk-taking shed a different shade of light on near every aspect of social and psychological development.

If the old adage that it takes a village to raise a child is true, then it must be truer still that it takes a global community of interdisciplinary experts to explain adolescence. If you truly want to really know how social and cultural life shapes adolescent neurobiology, it's all in these pages. With so many international cross-disciplinary contributors, this could have been a patchwork ragbag of a book about adolescence. But it isn't. This is a gallery of unique and brilliantly rendered portraits of today and tomorrow's adolescents, curated with flair and aplomb.

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Autism Spectrum Disorders

Edited by David Amaral,
Geraldine Dawson
& Daniel Geschwind.
Oxford University Press USA. 2011.
£150.00 (hb). 1520pp.
ISBN: 9780195371826



Autism Spectrum Disorders through the Lifespan

By Digby Tantam.
Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 2011.
£75.00 (hb). 576pp.
ISBN: 9781843109938

attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder). Whereas most psychiatrists have had just a glimpse of the newcomers on the corner of their street, a number of recent official publications obligate services to make provision for individuals with ASD. In addition, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has just published guidelines on the identification and diagnosis of ASD making it a 'current and present' issue for all psychiatrists. In the past, adult ASD had often escaped general psychiatrists' notice. The publication of these two books is timely, relevant and indeed significant.

The first volume, edited and authored by leading researchers in the field of ASD, mainly from across the Atlantic, provides a summary of the current knowledge on recent advances in the developmental psychology, neurobiology, genetics and much more related to the disorder. Laid out in eleven sections ranging from diagnosis to public policy and comprising 83 chapters, this scholarly book provides a panoramic view of research findings in various aspects of the subject that include less known areas such as animal models in autism, neuropathology and associated conditions such as seizures, and allergy. It incorporates topics on immunology, gastroenterology and infectious diseases related to ASD.

Clinicians will find the ten chapters under the section on psychiatric comorbidities particularly informative. The chapters on the relationship between obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and ASD and the three chapters on broader autism phenotype are particularly instructive. Developmental features of ASD, their developmental trajectories and findings from the psychological research into the brain bases are well covered. The book, however, is highly skewed in the direction of biological and developmental psychological research and less focused on practical applications and treatment. The section on best practices focuses more on diagnosis and there is little on management. The book provides an authoritative review of a fast-developing area of research into ASD and should be a reference text for both child and adolescent psychiatrists as well as paediatricians. All psychiatrists who want to update their knowledge on the subject would find more than a few chapters that are important to their area of work.

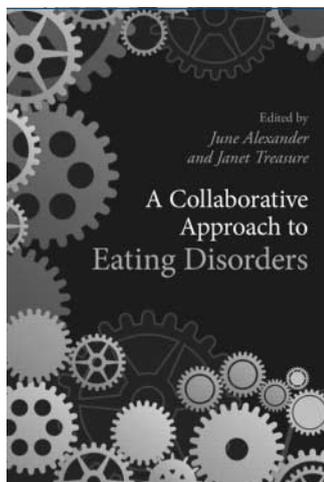
Autism Spectrum Disorders through the Lifespan is a single-author book based on the clinical experience and interests of Professor Tantam, a well-known British authority on the subject. Divided into two parts, sciences basic to ASD and clinical aspects of the disorder, this book too attempts to cover ASD in its entirety, but it is the clinical focus and personal approach that sets it apart. The most impressive feature (and unusual for an adult psychiatrist) is that Professor Tantam takes a developmental approach to ASD and discusses the presentations during infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood, illustrating this with a number of case examples. More importantly, he makes the point that people with ASD are likely to be referred to mental health services at times of transitions between developmental stages when new skills or new forms of adaptation are called for. In addition, comorbidity with psychiatric conditions such as OCD and social phobia is likely to be high and Tantam points out the paucity of research in this area. Clinicians will find useful the tables on assessing rigidity, non-verbal expression in ASD, social aloofness, social phobia and OCD. Unfortunately, the chapter on Asperger syndrome in adulthood is comparatively short. A particular omission is lack of ASD questionnaires and rating scales. One other criticism of the book is that it is overinclusive and, at times, idiosyncratic. For example, topics marginal to ASD such as prosopagnosia, rare genetic syndromes and epilepsies are discussed in some detail. The book would have benefitted from more robust editing.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is one of the two new kids on the block in clinical adult psychiatry (the other being adult

Together, these two publications provide a sound basis for the understanding of ASD, the first for its academic prowess and the second for its chapters on clinical aspects and anecdotes. However, they are voluminous and useful mainly for reference. The definitive clinical handbook on ASD with sufficient coverage of the disorder in adults is yet to be written. Organising services for adults with ASD at a time of austerity and 'efficiency savings' is another matter.

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A Collaborative Approach to Eating Disorders

Edited by June Alexander
& Janet Treasure
Routledge, 2011.
£25.99 (pb). 344 pp.
ISBN: 9780415581462

This new book on eating disorders, which is targeted primarily at general practitioners (GPs), is a collaboration between June Alexander, an ex-eating disorders sufferer and activist, and Janet Treasure, a world-renowned researcher in the field. They have brought together an impressive array of clinicians and researchers from around the globe to contribute chapters.

Divided into four sections – understanding risk and resilience for eating disorders, treatment, clinical presentations and changing the culture – the book includes many biographical accounts, bringing to life the experiences and insights of people with eating disorders and their families.

Part one has three particularly well-written chapters. One elucidates the latest research on genetics, another on neurobiology, synthesises the complex aetiological factors and the interactions between them, and the third, entitled 'Emotions and empathic understanding', competently describes new evidence on the range of deficits in emotional processing in anorexia and the salience of these deficits in treatment and recovery.

Part two, which focuses on treatment, has several chapters that describe how to engage, empower and teach the family practical skills to fight the illness. Many adult patients cite the importance of a supportive partner as the main contributing factor to their recovery and this section includes a chapter outlining a new cognitive-behavioural therapy-based protocol, which helps couples to respond to the challenges of anorexia more effectively as a team. Eating disorder clinicians are noticing rising comorbidity and complexity of clinical presentations, with a significant number of patients presenting with self-harm and emotional dysregulation. One chapter describes and provides a clear rationale for an innovative, combined dialectical behaviour therapy and family-based treatment for adolescents to address this

issue. The chapter on relapse prevention brilliantly elucidates the multitude of functions an eating disorder plays in a person's life and the huge anxiety and challenge of managing life without the protection of the illness.

Part three, which presents brief chapters on the clinical presentations of subgroups, has a very useful chapter describing how to diagnose an eating disorder in a child. This will be invaluable for GPs to feel confident in understanding the clinical presentation in this age group. This chapter also includes an excellent and succinct outline of an in-patient treatment plan for food phobia in childhood.

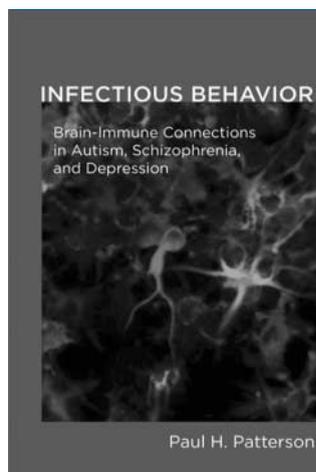
Part four is a brief, impassioned plea for better public understanding of eating disorders as the very serious brain disorders they are, and better, faster access to empirically supported treatment for patients.

The book also includes a great list of resources for people with eating disorders and their carers. My only criticism is that a few chapters were too brief to be really useful and a couple required further editing.

I would recommend this book to all clinicians who want to know what's new in the science and treatment of eating disorders in an easy-to-read and jargon-free format.

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Infectious Behavior: Brain-immune Connections in Autism, Schizophrenia, and Depression

By Paul H. Patterson.
MIT Press, 2011. £17.95 (hb).
176 pp.
ISBN: 9780262016452

In Bristol in the 1920s, W. L. Templeton attempted to treat patients with chronic schizophrenia by infecting them with malaria. This became known as pyrotherapy. Fast forward a century and there is renewed interest in the involvement of infection and the immune response in major mental illness. A number of encouraging trials on the antibiotic minocycline in treating schizophrenia symptoms have recently been done and further studies are underway. One suggested mechanism of action is minocycline's purported anti-inflammatory effect. The involvement of an immune response in schizophrenia, autism and depression is the core hypothesis in this book by Paul Patterson, a developmental neurobiologist at Caltech.

Drawing on epidemiology, animal models of mental illness and, fascinatingly, the 'crosstalk' between the immune system and the brain, the book develops on the theme of the fetal environment and maternal infection at this time, the resulting effect on gene expression (the increasingly popular field of