

function". They have, therefore, a tendency to a reductive trajectory, although based on a strong claim of believability. How strongly the narratives can be maintained in the real world is of some importance, as is the issue of how far these tools can help address the emotional content of these experiences. I have some concern that there may be a certain encouragement given to an inappropriate didacticism at the expense of the more engaged, shared emotional meanings that are ultimately more personally costly.

There is the real issue here that the provision of helpful aids can only be one part of any endeavour to support people at times of crisis and difficulty, and what people are often seeking are not so much 'interventions' as relationships with meaning to frame experiences. Given this, the narratives should equally be seen as structuring and creating meaning for supporters, many of whom may have little personal experience to draw upon for these purposes.

The hospital and out-patient titles are particularly useful in addressing the issue of consent or, rather, lack of it. For specialist learning disability services this remains an issue to be vigilant about, and many services will have examples of relatives being contacted after 15 or more years of infrequent or non-contact with an individual for the purposes of 'obtaining' consent. Regular contact between specialist services and key other secondary care specialities about this issue is of benefit, and I would strongly encourage joint discussion and use of these books in that context.

Propp, V. (1968) *The Morphology of the Folk Tale*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

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Psychiatric Genetics

By John I. Nurnberger Jr & Wade Berrettini. London: Chapman & Hall Medical. 1998. 164 pp. £45.00 (hb). ISBN 0 412 53580 7

Nurnberger and Berrettini are well-respected authors with a strong track record in psychiatric genetic research, particularly in mood disorders. In general, the book is well presented, although there

are a few surprising typographical errors. In addition to short chapters on methods and genetic counselling there is succinct coverage of most of the psychiatric disorders that have received psychiatric genetic attention to date. The coverage of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism is, however, excessively brief. The conciseness of this volume is both a strength and a weakness. The lack of detail is frustrating in places and some controversial statements are made that would benefit from more detailed treatment and discussion.

This title is undoubtedly superior to the recently published but disappointing *Handbook of Psychiatric Genetics* (Blum & Noble, 1996) (reviewed in *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 1998, 62, 999). However, at present the best user-friendly and balanced introduction to the field is provided by *Seminars in Psychiatric Genetics* (McGuffin *et al*, 1994; 2nd edn in preparation).

Psychiatric genetics (particularly molecular genetic investigation) is a rapidly moving field. All textbooks dealing with rapidly moving fields suffer from the problem of quickly becoming out of date. It is therefore important that the interested reader supplements perusal of a textbook with computer searches to access recent publications. Of particular interest in this case will be the Chromosome Workshop reports published annually following the World Congress of Psychiatric Genetics.

Blum, K. & Noble, E.P. (eds) (1996) *Handbook of Psychiatric Genetics*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

McGuffin, P., Owen, M. J., O'Donovan, M. C., et al (1994) *Seminars in Psychiatric Genetics*. London: Gaskell.

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International Handbook of Cognitive and Behavioural Treatments for Psychological Disorders

Edited by V. E. Caballo. Oxford: Pergamon. 1998. 698 pp. US\$60.00 (hb). ISBN 0 08 043433 9

This book introduces techniques of cognitive and behavioural treatment for specific categories of mental disorder. Over one-

third of it is given to anxiety disorders, while depression and schizophrenia each have several chapters. Single chapters consider circumscribed problems such as hypochondriasis and sexual dysfunction, and people with special needs ('mental retardation' and behaviours associated with dementia). Although the book claims to follow the DSM-IV classification of mental disorders, major gaps exist. Body dysmorphic disorder receives detailed consideration, but all the eating disorders are ignored. Problem gambling and impulse control disorders (those "not elsewhere classified") each have chapters, but substance misuse is mentioned only in a chapter on schizophrenia. Forensic issues are raised in an excellent chapter on the paraphilias, but there is no attempt to discuss cognitive treatments of any of the personality disorders recognised by DSM-IV. Psychological disorders do not include somatisation disorder or chronic pain. Apart from brief consideration of adolescent depression, the use of behavioural and cognitive treatments with children does not feature.

All chapters provide information about treatment techniques. This tends to be much more detailed and practical when the focus is relatively narrow (agoraphobia, gambling, hypochondriasis). Behavioural treatments are well represented, with a particularly good review of behavioural treatments for depression from Lewinsohn *et al*. While there are no detailed descriptions of behaviour modification techniques, the importance of milieu to psychoeducation is recognised, and group and family treatments are included. The extent to which chapters succeed in providing a critical evaluation of the relative merits of different treatment techniques is variable: despite its practical merits, the book is not a consistent guide to evidence on efficacy. 'International' here indicates that the contributors are from North America, Spain, the UK and Germany, and references are rarely obscure or inappropriate. The book is substantially bound, with many helpful diagrams and examples of tools used in treatment.

Reservations aside, the chapters give trainees an idea of what most cognitive and behavioural treatments involve, and the volume should find a place alongside its competitors in larger departmental libraries.

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