

Book reviews

EDITED BY SIDNEY CROWN, FEMI OYEBODE and ROSALIND RAMSAY

Young People and Substance Misuse

Edited by Ilana Crome, Hamid Ghodse, Eilish Gilvarry & Paul McArdle. London: Gaskell. 2004. 240 pp. £15.00 (pb). ISBN 0 904671 01 2

In keeping with the current trend of full disclosure, I should point out that this book is published by Gaskell and that I consider the editors to be friends and colleagues. I am also not a fan of multiply authored books. Fourteen contributors (including the editors themselves) have been involved in producing a book of 14 chapters.

The chapters flow logically from prevention through to treatment and it is assumed that the reader has no specialist knowledge of the field. This makes it ideal for those identified on the back cover as among the intended readership – teachers, carers, parents, researchers and policy-makers. However, psychiatrists with a background in general or child and adolescent psychiatry or in substance misuse would have to read a great deal of text before coming across any new knowledge specific to young people.

A few chapters are outstanding. First, the chapter on smoking by Kate Woodhouse, flows smoothly from prevalence through prevention to treatment. Its inclusion is essential, given that, as the author states, ‘tobacco use is the leading behavioural cause of poor health, early death and health inequality in the UK’. In the chapter on treatment, the academic bringing together of the evidence that ‘treatment works’ and the subsequent descriptive outline of treatments used in practice were neatly done and give a good sense of what should and could be done. For policy-makers, the final chapter on developing an evidence-based model for services should be required reading. Two other chapters – one on the ethical and legal principles relevant to young people and substance misuse, and the other on the implications of parental substance misuse – are timely, as we live in an increasingly litigious society, and we have a current shift in focus onto the needs of the child as paramount.

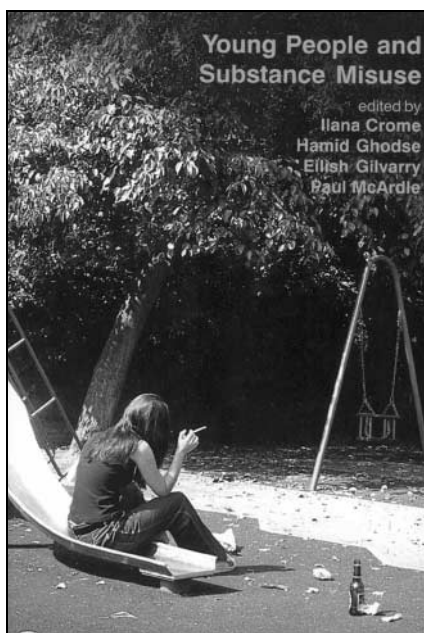
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emphatically states a ‘sex-positive’ position as well as a preference for taking the best out of the available theory and practice.

It is good to see a psychiatrist as at home with social science and political theory as with psychodynamic theory and sexology, although her impatience shows with those who want their sex and therapeutic endeavours to be only mechanical. She dwells in a number of ways on the symbolic dimensions of sexual practice both for individuals and for subgroups of the population for whom this has special significance. As a result she deals unusually even-handedly with gay and straight sexual preference and incorporates recent feminist and queer theory into her review. This is not therefore a book for those clinicians who will find discussion, in drily humorous tones, of the ‘lesbian sex mafia’ unnerving rather than educational.

The second half of her book is on sexual topics of some sensitivity. She addresses transgressive sex, transgender issues and sex in the consulting room with compassion and discrimination. There is a lot in this book for most of us. Even those whose regular approach to the treatment of schizophrenia avoids consideration of sexuality may find their clinical practice enlivened by this thoughtful and scholarly piece of work.

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Sexuality: A Biopsychosocial Approach

By Chess Denman. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2004. 368 pp. £17.99 (pb). ISBN 0 333 78648 3

Chess Denman’s thesis is that sex and sexuality are part of life and so they should routinely contribute to clinical formulation. This is an admirable aim, and she shows us how it is done through vignettes encompassing a wide range of clinical presentations. This is not to say that she has written a textbook, because the book is more than that: it is an extended essay on sexuality built on the literal premise that sex, until proved otherwise, is a good thing. She espouses a non-judgemental attitude to sexuality in most of its incarnations. She

