

an altruist whose royalties from this book go to a foundation for public education in bipolar disorder. Her touch is also evident in the chapter on psychotherapy which is full of detailed material about the reactions to illness which the therapist needs to handle, but also manages to be current (up to 2006) in summarising the controlled trials of psychoeducation, family approaches, cognitive-behavioural therapy and interpersonal and social rhythms therapy. This chapter also gives a welcome psychosocial element to what is mainly a biological and psychopharmacological book.

Like the first edition, this is destined to be a standard reference work on bipolar disorder. There are some lesser cavils but, overall, it is a tour de force. It should again be good for 15 years, the rapidity of modern advances notwithstanding.

Eugene Paykel University of Cambridge, Department of Psychiatry, Douglas House, 18E Trumpington Road, Cambridge CB2 8AH, UK. Email: esp10@cam.ac.uk

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Seminars in General Adult Psychiatry (2nd edn)

Edited by George Stein & Greg Wilkinson. Gaskell. 2007. 834pp. £65.00 (hb). ISBN 9781904671442

Seminars in General Adult Psychiatry as a title is slightly misleading. The Oxford English Dictionary definition of a seminar describes, 'a class that meets for systematic study under the direction of a teacher'. The key elements of seminars are groups of, usually, more advanced students actively participating in a discursive learning process. Clearly, the written word will always fall short of this definition. That being said, Stein & Wilkinson, in their preface to this second edition, try to provide direction. This large textbook (the second edition now comes in a single volume despite containing more than the combination of the two volumes of the first) is aimed at those in training for Membership of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Daunting at first glance, the editors' guidance gives a route in, highlighting where to start reading for the novice trainee. They also give permission to skip some of the heavier, more theoretical parts of these early readings, saving them for later when they will be less overwhelming as the trainee's knowledge and experience grows.

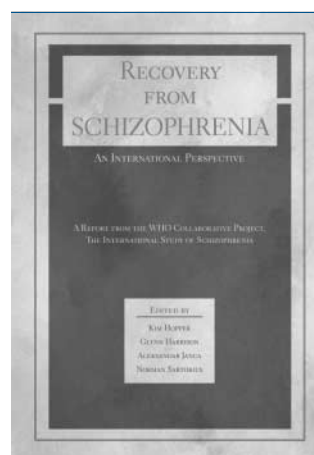
Soundly rooted in clinical psychiatry, the chapters dealing with the disorders and therapies do so in a fairly traditional style. Evidence behind therapeutic approaches is appropriately emphasised and set in a clinical context with evidence for non-drug therapies being included in this edition. It is clear from the therapeutics chapters, and also those on service provision, that this is very much a UK textbook. The references to National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines, mental

health legislation and the care programme approach locate it more particularly in England. That being said, NICE guidelines are not mentioned in isolation; those of the American Psychiatric Association are referenced too. These points are not highlighted as a criticism. For some, perhaps overseas trainees aiming to sit the MRCPsych, it may be an added bonus in preparing for the exam.

So does this book justify its price? There is no doubt that as a textbook for the specialism of general adult psychiatry it serves its purpose well. For trainees proceeding to the MRCPsych in particular it is a worthwhile purchase. But, like all such books, it is worth perusing a copy to see whether its style matches your learning and reading preferences. My review copy, it's worth noting, has gone straight from my desk to my trainee's as he prepares for his exams.

Brian Lunn The Royal Victoria Infirmary, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE1 4LP, UK. Email: b.s.lunn@ncl.ac.uk

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Recovery from Schizophrenia: An International Perspective

Edited by Kim Hooper, Glyn Harrison, Aleksander Janca & Norman Sartorius. Oxford University Press. 2007. 392 pp. £49.00 (hb). ISBN 9780195313673

This book is a long overdue account of a research tour de force led by the World Health Organization (WHO) between 1991 and 1996, which made a crucial addition to the contemporaneous research challenging the early Kraepelinian view that the long-term prognosis for schizophrenia was almost uniformly poor. Enormous difficulties arise when comparisons are made across multiple studies in different countries, using different sample frames, sampling criteria, periods of follow up and assessment measures, and this provided the rationale for a series of well-designed WHO multi-country studies using uniform methodology. However, such studies raise enormous problems of their own, not least the difficulties in negotiation, coordination, implementation to attain their goal and, especially in this case, publication, since this particular book had to face unprecedented challenges in finally reaching the light of day.

The International Study of Schizophrenia was a transcultural investigation coordinated by WHO in 18 centres in 14 countries, and was designed to examine patterns of long-term course and outcome of severe mental disorders in different cultures, develop better methods for studying characteristics of mental disorders in different settings and to strengthen the scientific base for future international research on schizophrenia from a public health perspective. Cohorts or participants assessed in a number of earlier WHO studies, and also local studies at three other centres, were followed up for between 12 and 26 years.

Recovery from Schizophrenia reports the combined findings and the separate findings from each centre. The central message from the study is that schizophrenia is largely an episodic disorder, with rather favourable outcome for a significant proportion of those afflicted, and that the long-term outcome for over half was quite good. Prognosis for these cohorts was better in low- and middle-income countries. Poor early course of illness was the best predictor of subsequent poor outcome, but even so a fifth with poor early course subsequently recovered. The linkage of the data to differences in local cultures, kinship networks, social support systems, local family and community beliefs, expectations and practices, health systems, and rapidly changing economies and urbanisation has raised more questions than have yet been answered. A key concern for the reader is how comparable were the original participants, given that they were drawn from a variety of studies of treatment populations 15–30 years ago rather

than from community samples. (Certainly people with chronic schizophrenia are commonly seen in low- and middle-income countries, finally abandoned by exhausted and impoverished families, and they are the one patient group with which the traditional healers I have met make no claim to have any success, in contrast to first-episode illness. The comparable effect of early and sustained support to the families of people with severe schizophrenia would seem to be well worth investigating.)

This book is a fascinating read for researchers and mental health professionals containing much to interest, educate and intrigue, and is a classic for the library bookshelf.

Rachel Jenkins, Institute of Psychiatry, De Crespigny Park, London SE5 8AF, UK.
Email: r.jenkins@iop.kcl.ac.uk

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