

BOOK REVIEW

Contemporary Psychiatry

By: Sidney Crown. London, Butterworth, 1984

This book is the third of two previous collections of articles from the *British Journal of Hospital Medicine* published in 1975 and 1982. Crown has selected these interesting topics and they were critically reviewed, expanded and updated by their original authors.

The book is written by thirty three expert authors covering thirty one different (*chapters*) topics divided into nine selected areas, namely, general clinical psychiatry, organic psychiatry, psychotherapy and behavioral modification, social psychiatry, substance abuse, psychosexual problems, childhood and adolescence, psychosomatic and liason psychiatry, and legal and forensic psychiatry.

There are two major strengths of this work. The first is the rich and detailed clinical description of the various disorders that are infrequently seen and usually overlooked by many psychiatrists. For example, the chapter on monosymptomatic hypochondriacal psychosis with the various presentations and the core of psychopathology seemed to be an interesting topic to read. Also, the chapter on violent behavior by psychiatric patients gives a new look on the different elements involved in such problems and covers areas that are usually neglected by many persons involved in the management of psychotic patients.

The second point of strength is in providing the reader with critical components and controversies that are problematic either in research or management of psychiatric patients. For example, the chapter of management of problems in psychogeriatrics provides well-planned guidelines and clinical frame of work for therapeutic interventions.

Most of the chapters in this well-done edited work combine both strengths. The section on psychosexual problems included the eclectic approach to the management of exhibitionism. One asset that I found in this chapter is that it does not only give a guide for assessment

and treatment planning, but also it teaches the reader the core strategy for creating and modifying the approach as one understands the steps of handling this difficult problem.

In addition to the strengths found within this work, I was confronted with some less interesting chapters that are more or less a miniature summary of what could be found in details in most of the textbooks of psychiatry. For example, the chapters on genetic contribution to the functional psychoses, toxic psychosis and rape and incest. The chapters on substance abuse, the sexually transmitted diseases seemed to be written with more emphasis on the medical aspect rather than, what I would have expected, the unique clinical psychiatric features. I think that these chapters were misplaced in this book.

Although one might wish that this small volume had been expanded to include some other topics, for example rehabilitation of schizophrenia rather than coping with schizophrenia and fate of childhood autism rather than management of this syndrome, however, this work provides a good introduction that facilitates the acquisition of current ideas and trends in psychiatry today.

Reading this book has been a pleasure and it is recommended for those preparing for higher psychiatric qualifications and those interested in research.

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