



BOOK REVIEWS

Primary HIV/AIDS Care. A Practical Guide for Primary Health Care Personnel in the Clinical and Supportive Care of People with HIV/AIDS

By Clive Evian. Fourth edition (10th Anniversary Year). Pp. 342. Illustrated. R255. JACANA. 2003. ISBN 1-919931-74-0. (Available from SAMA-HMPG. Price R255, members R230.)

In the 4th edition of his book, *Primary HIV/AIDS Care*, Dr Clive Evian has again produced a valuable and practical resource for health care personnel. The format works well in that it is easy to read. The text is brief and informative and is supported by illustrations and diagrams, with highlighting of the essential messages.

This is a comprehensive guide addressing topics from HIV testing, counselling, specific needs of women and children through to clinical and psychosocial care in all settings.

The only deficiency and possibly under-researched topic is that of palliative care which is referred to briefly in the terminal care of the child and not described in the continuum of supportive care for HIV patients. The summary of pain control is also incomplete, with some outdated information. I look forward to seeing these topics updated in the next edition.

Liz Gwyther

Practical Child Psychiatry. The Clinician's Guide

Edited by Sharon Taylor, Kenneth Nunn and Bryan Lask. Pp. xiii + 381. £35. BMJ. 2003. ISBN 0-7279-1593-2. (Available from SAMA-HMPG. Price R599, members R559.)

Only authors with extensive experience and a deep understanding of troubled children could have written a book which covers virtually every possible presentation and situation, and all corresponding treatment principles. The authors cover both clinical child psychiatry and broader child mental health issues and manage to maintain a thoughtful style despite the breadth of the subject.

Besides chapters on standard psychiatric conditions like anxiety, depression, substance abuse and psychosis, considerable attention is given to mental health problems like

the maltreated child, the bereaved child and antisocial behaviour. There is also more than the usual discussion of medical contexts, such as the medically ill child, the dying child, and neurodevelopmental and neuropsychiatric disorders. Developmental problems like feeding and eating problems and fears are also covered.

The most unique aspect of the material itself is its strong psycho-educational approach. Mental health, developmental and psychiatric concepts, like psychosis, are so carefully and lucidly explained that a lay person could easily understand them. The authors expressly avoid the excessive use of technical terms, and go to great lengths to couch explanations in everyday language.

The section on treatment merits special mention. Psychopharmacology is well presented, with plenty of tables listing indications, prescribing information etc., although it must be noted that some of the medications are not available in South Africa. The dismissal of tricyclic antidepressants altogether is perhaps a little too absolute. The descriptions of family therapy and psychotherapy are particularly good, although the detailed discussion of the latter is probably beyond the needs of the expected readership.

A possible weakness of the book is that it attempts too much, sacrificing depth for breadth, and does not always maintain an appropriate balance between sections. Although depression is far commoner and of concern to a much wider range of professionals, autism and psychosis receive the same coverage in terms of length of the respective sections, while neurodevelopmental disorders and the medically ill child receive greater coverage.

The book is marketed for 'the busy clinician'. I would recommend it for medical and allied health students and staff working in general hospitals. *Practical Child Psychiatry* can be ranked among the best handbooks for general medical settings, and is well worth the asking price.

B Robertson

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