

differentiation and professional recognition of the condition more than 20 years ago.

Whatever your branch of adult or adolescent psychiatry, a significant percentage of your out- and in-patients will suffer from an underlying BPD. You will find ample information in this book to aid you in recognising the coexistence of a BPD in Axis I patients as well as those presenting with such problems as somatic complaints, eating disorders, depression, overdoses, substance misuse, trauma and self-mutilating behaviour.

The classification can be misused and this is well discussed. (Misuse can include under- and overdiagnosis.) Making an accurate diagnosis is really important because these patients suffer over a very long time, as do those professionals and family members who encounter them. Most importantly, there is increasing evidence (which is well-marshalled in this book) that, when an appropriate range of therapies are well coordinated and structured by specialist teams, a considerable reduction in disturbance can be achieved. Longer-term treatment with appropriately trained professionals leads to an increasing capacity to contain impulses, feelings and affects, with consequent improvement in social functioning. Without coordinated and skilled therapies the likelihood is that there will be a continuation of costly destructive and self-destructive behaviour and impoverished lives. Although the author is American, he is clearly well acquainted with important recent British contributions to understanding and treating BPD and groundbreaking research into the clinical effectiveness of such treatments.

This is a very readable book. It is scholarly, up to date and full of clinical wisdom (and vignettes). It is written from a broad empirical basis and therefore the place of medication, partial hospitalisation, family, group, cognitive and psychodynamic approaches are well covered and integrated. I would therefore recommend it to clinicians of all disciplines. A particularly useful section lists other relevant books, films, videos, newsletters and websites.

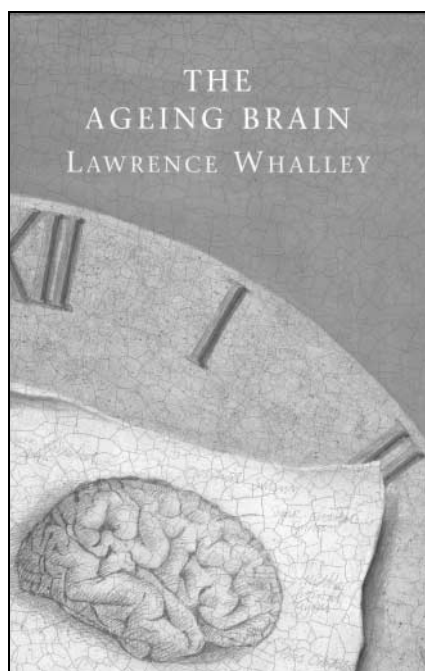
Familiarity with the book could be of considerable assistance in developing clinical governance recommendations and for audit projects and personal development plans. I hope that it might come to the attention of commissioning agencies who may be able to play an important part in guaranteeing that adult mental health services are appropriately organised to

provide adequate services and skills to meet the treatment needs of patients with BPD.

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The Ageing Brain

By Lawrence Whalley. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 2001. 182 pp. £16.99 (hb). ISBN 0 297 64587 0



This book is part of the 'Maps of the Mind' series on brain research and would probably be classified as 'popular science'. Although the general reader would have little difficulty following the clearly explained concepts, the book is essential reading for anybody working in the field of old age psychiatry or neurology. The author is professor and head of mental health at the University of Aberdeen and states in his preface that one of his intentions is 'to counter the widespread pessimism about what the future has in store for us'. Beginning with a lucid discussion of the slippery concept of ageing, Whalley details physical, social and psychological aspects of growing older, and describes current thinking on the changes in mental ability which appear characteristic of normal ageing. After setting this solid and vivid scene of normality, he moves on to the dementias and their causes, chiefly

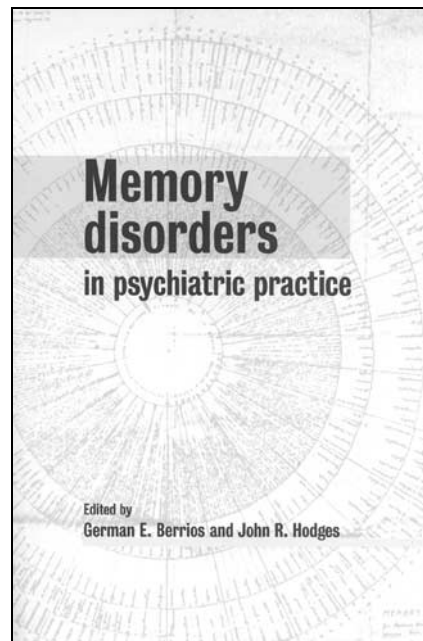
Alzheimer's disease and vascular pathology, and concludes with a plausible account of possible future developments in the treatment and perhaps prevention of these devastating disorders.

The book gives an excellent and readable account of brain function and dysfunction. Whalley manages to be concise and comprehensive at the same time, presenting potentially daunting hard science in an elegant style and including case studies to bring his concepts to life. His use of metaphor is impressive; for example, the mind is likened to a theatre, with various elements – audience, narrator, executive controller – representing different aspects of cognitive function. The scope is broad, encompassing cell biology, immunology, genetics, psychology and even virtual reality, and all in 182 pages.

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Memory Disorders in Psychiatric Practice

Edited by German E. Berrios & John R. Hodges. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2000. 520 pp. £39.95 (pb). ISBN 0 521 57671 7



I reviewed this book with four criteria in mind: first, ease of readability; second, whether the knowledge base is appropriate