

Book reviews

EDITED BY SIDNEY CROWN, FEMI OYEBODE and ROSALIND RAMSAY

The Overlap of Affective and Schizophrenic Spectra

Edited by Andreas Marneros
& Hagop S. Akiskal. Cambridge University
Press. 2007. 299pp. £65.00 (hb).
ISBN 0521858585



If this book is not of interest, the reader has no business being a psychiatrist.

The official classifications, ICD-10 and DSM-IV, that psychiatrists are currently required to use are sets of descriptive categories that were designed to provide clinicians and researchers with a reasonably reliable language to aid communication and decision-making. Developed from the opinions of committees of experts rather than on the basis of useful data regarding aetiology and pathogenesis, the categories are essentially a modified version of the basic dichotomous scheme proposed by Kraepelin at the end of the 19th century. As has been argued in editorials within this journal, there is an ever-increasing and progressively more robust body of data that demonstrates the need for modern psychiatry to free itself from a historically based dichotomous classification and move towards approaches that recognise alternative

diagnostic entities that more closely reflect the illnesses of our patients (Craddock & Owen, 2005; Marneros, 2006; Angst, 2007).

This book approaches mood and psychotic disorders from such an alternative perspective, namely considering clinical spectra of affective and schizophrenic symptomatology that may overlap within the same individuals either at the same or at different times during life. The editors are well-known for their work in this area. There are 14 chapters that deal with a broad range of clinical, biological and psychological issues using a spectrum approach. The authors of these chapters include leaders in the field who have published important data and theoretical papers that examine the overlap in mood and psychotic symptomatology beyond the traditional schizophrenia/mood disorder categories. The book is well written and provides an excellent accessible overview of relevant research.

If psychiatry is to translate the opportunities offered by new research methodologies into benefits for patients, we must move to a classificatory approach that is worthy of the 21st century. This book provides a wealth of useful, clinically relevant information that will be of interest to any reader who accepts the importance of taking account of a patient's illness beyond simple allocation to an operational diagnostic category. All psychiatrists involved in the management of individuals with mood and psychotic illnesses should read this book.

Angst, J. (2007) The bipolar spectrum. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **190**, 189–191.

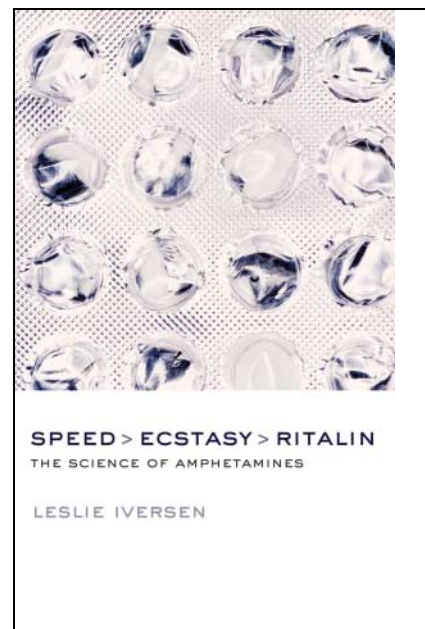
Craddock, N. & Owen M. J. (2005) The beginning of the end for the Kraepelinian dichotomy. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **186**, 364–366.

Marneros, A. (2006) Beyond the Kraepelinian dichotomy: acute and transient psychotic disorders and the necessity for clinical differentiation. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **189**, 1–2.

Nick Craddock Department of Psychological Medicine, Cardiff University, Heath Park, Cardiff CF14 4XN, UK. Email: craddockn@cardiff.ac.uk
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Speed, Ecstasy and Ritalin: The Science of Amphetamines

By Leslie Iversen. Oxford University Press.
2006. 222pp. £24.95 (hb). ISBN 0198530897



The 2005/06 British Crime Survey estimated that ecstasy and amphetamines were the third and fourth (after cannabis and cocaine) most widely used illicit drugs among 16- to 59-year-olds (by 1.6% and 1.3% respectively) in England and Wales. More worryingly, among 16- to 24-year-olds the corresponding figures increased to 4.3% and 3.3%. There are also fears of an emerging epidemic of illicit methamphetamine (crystal meth or ice) misuse in the UK, resulting in its recent reclassification from Class B to Class A under the Misuse of Drugs Act 2005. So, too, methylphenidate and dexamphetamine were recognised by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2006) as appropriate treatment options for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents. Amphetamine dependence, as part of polysubstance dependence, its many psychiatric complications (depression, anxiety, psychosis, etc.) and dual diagnosis are not uncommon presentations in psychiatric practice. It is in view of all of the above that this book is timely and relevant to clinicians, addiction scientists, drug policy makers and the public.

Leslie Iversen (a distinguished pharmacologist) presents an overview of the 'positive and negative aspects of amphetamines

(speed, ecstasy and Ritalin)' from a scientist's perspective.

This book is set out in nine chapters. They include an excellent overview of the chemistry of amphetamines and their effects on humans; an account of the history and rationale of their use over the past century for conditions such as narcolepsy, depression, obesity and ADHD; a short chapter on their use in the military and misuse in sport; a social history of amphetamine misuse in the USA and UK, and a detailed account of the methamphetamine epidemic in the USA and South East Asia. Topics covered in the second half of the book include the relevance of amphetamine psychosis to understanding schizophrenia, evidence for the behavioural and neurological toxicity of amphetamines, mainly from animal studies, a summary of their chemistry, history, dangerousness, therapeutic use in post-traumatic stress disorder, and concluding with a look to the future.

The chapters vary in their relevance and appeal to different (although by no means mutually exclusive) professions, with some being more for clinicians, others for basic scientists and a couple primarily for drug policy makers. The book is easy to read and understand, it answers all the key questions it sets out to address, it is interspersed with interesting first-person accounts from amphetamine users, and it takes an international perspective. My only criticism is that it lacks a clinical feel, even on topics such as amphetamine dependence, amphetamine psychosis and the use of methylphenidate in ADHD – perhaps my clinician's bias. All in all, this book provides a very good account of the use and misuse of amphetamines from a scientist's perspective.

Sanju George Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Trust, The Bridge, Larch Croft, Chelmsley Wood, Solihull B69 4AL, UK. Email: sanju.george@talk21.com
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The Psychiatric Interview in Clinical Practice (2nd edn)

By Roger A. McKinnon, Robert Michels & Peter J. Buckley. American Psychiatric Publishing. 2006. 679pp. US\$65.00 (hb). ISBN 1585620904

Interviewing and communication skills are rightly assuming a prominent position in

medical education. UK postgraduate trainees will soon be responsible for assessing trainees' communication skills, even though they may have had little or no training themselves. Therefore, books such as this appear timely and welcome, although it is unusual for the second edition of a book to be published 35 years after the first. For a book about communicating, however, the title is somewhat misleading. It appears to have been written primarily for clinicians assessing patients with a view to offering psychodynamic psychotherapy.

The book is divided into four main parts which cover general principles, major clinical syndromes, special clinical situations and technical factors affecting the interview. Most of the book focuses on clinical syndromes, with chapters on, for example, the narcissistic patient and the psychotic patient. Each chapter has a similar structure of characteristic clinical features, differential diagnosis, defence mechanisms and developmental psychodynamics, followed by 'the management of the interview'.

This is a large book, written by three wise men with a wealth of clinical experience. It is filled with helpful nuggets of advice. For example, the chapter on the obsessive-compulsive patient beautifully describes the diverting tactics patients use to avoid directly answering questions, with useful suggestions on how to counter them.

The parts on the management of the interview are the most rewarding to read, particularly the section on discussion of suicide with patients with depression. Given the title, I expected more emphasis on basic communication skills, such as question style and responding to cues. There was discussion of listening and facilitation, but in the main the focus was more on psychoanalytic understanding. The occasional excerpts of dialogue were excellent, but it would have benefited greatly from many more of these valuable illustrations.

The book is written in a flowing style with long paragraphs taking up a whole page. Nowadays, however, with short attention spans and many books having attractively laid-out chapters filled with bullet points and coloured boxes, I wonder how many trainees will actually read a book like this.

For clinicians negotiating the early stages of assessment and engagement in psychodynamic psychotherapy, it is no doubt an extremely useful book, but probably not the first choice for those wishing

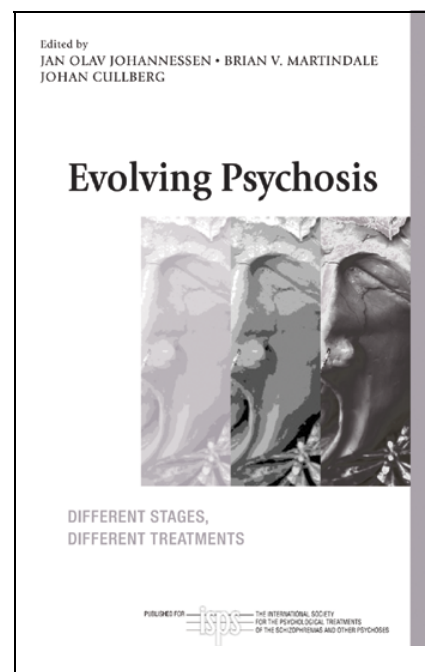
to purchase a more comprehensive book on general psychiatric interviewing. Libraries should definitely have a copy for people to dip into for helpful tips on specific clinical presentations.

Finally, there was a long wait for this second edition and I wonder whether we will still be undertaking standard psychiatric assessments 35 years from now.

Simon Michaelson Mental Health Centre, Northwick Park Hospital, Watford Road, Harrow HA1 3UJ, UK. Email: simon.michaelson@nhs.net
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Evolving Psychosis: Different Stages, Different Treatments

Edited by Jan Olav Johannessen, Brian V. Martindale & Johan Cullberg. Routledge. 2006. 320pp. £19.99 (pb). ISBN 1583917233



What we have here, on the whole, is a series of essays and monologues which invite the reader to focus on the success and importance of psychosocial treatments. There are individual chapters on phase-specific treatment, which go some way to addressing whether early needs-adapted treatment can prevent the long-term effects of psychosis. But what is also contained in this interesting and challenging book broadens its scope considerably.

We learn, for example, about the post-Lancian view, ideas rarely taught in