



review

Drug Misuse and Dependence: UK Guidelines on Clinical Management

Department of Health (England) and the devolved administrations, Department of Health (England), the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Northern Ireland Executive, 2007, 128pp.

This book is presented in an easily readable style and layout. Remarkably, the contributors managed to succinctly synthesise the best current evidence, yet presented in a volume 19 pages slimmer than the previous edition. The emphasis of the latter has moved from information on structure and models of drug-treatment services to evidence-based hands-on guidance for professionals providing the service. The incorporation of proportionate service user and carer representation into the working group emphasises the need for involvement of these crucial stakeholders in planning and success of treatment. The audience of the book has been widened to include all 'clinicians' such as nurses, pharmacists, psychologists and

drug workers, with doctors remaining the primary focus.

The introductory chapter opens positively, citing references confirming drug treatment in the UK is not only evidence based, but also clinically and cost effective. However, despite the rapid expansion of effective drug treatment over the last decade, the UK remains among the highest rates of recorded illicit drug misuse in the Western world. The chapter on clinical governance tackles the 21st century *novus* issues such as non-medical prescribing, patient-group directions and partnership with patients and carers in successful treatment delivery. Detailed guidance is provided on assessing parents who misuse drugs, and when, what and how to prescribe substitutes safely. Conspicuous presentation of risk management information as bullet points on a contrasting orange background allows a quick reference. There is a detailed chapter collating evidence on the leading psychosocial interventions including the yet untested and possibly controversial contingency management. The table in Chapter 4 'Responses to drug and alcohol misuse on top of an opioid prescription' gives clarity in an area of ever recurring treatment conundrum.

One of its demerits is that the chapter dealing with specific populations fails to cater for the increasing number of ethnic minority substance misusers. This book also fails to give guidance to service providers on attracting never-engaged substance misusers into treatment. The correction for miscalculated HIV figures on p12 typed on a loose piece of paper placed between the pages of the book appears tacky.

Overall, this book is without doubt a must read for fresh and experienced substance misuse clinicians given the quality of information presented in an easily digestible style. It also lends itself as a quick guide to other professions whose work entails dealing with substance misusers. Furthermore, it is free on request from the publishers via telephone on 08701 555 455 quoting product code UKCG07.

Taiwo Ajayi Associate Specialist in General Adult Psychiatry, Assessment and Shared Care Team, Ferryview Health Centre, 27 John Wilson Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6PZ, email: taoajayi@doctors.org.uk

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correction

The citation on p. 261 should read: 'Sawhney *et al*, 2007'. The corresponding reference should read: 'Sawhney, I., Tajer, A. & Morgan, J. (2007) Copying clinical

letters to patients – views of people with learning disabilities and their carers. *British Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, **53**, 17–23.'

(Does a business-like letter written for a general practitioner meet the standards for patients? *Psychiatric Bulletin*, **32**, 259–262).