# Book review

## DSM–IV Internet Companion

By M. Robert Morrison & Robert F. Stamps. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 1998. 203 pp. £19.95 (pb). ISBN: 0 393 70267

The Internet has much to offer to psychiatrists, patients with mental health problems and their carers. However, it is not easy to find relevant, good quality Web pages.

The authors pose the question on the back cover "Do you really have the time or inclination to find those sites that are professionally meaningful?" This book is an attempt to do much of the hard work for those without such time or inclination. Chapter 1 (actually 60% of the book) lists approximately 1000 relevant pages and URLs (uniform resource locators according to Net jargon) "that relate directly to the diagnosis and treatment of the mental disorders found in DSM–IV". There follows a chapter on psychology/psychiatry search engines, which are designed to help find other relevant mental health sites.

The last two chapters (General sites of interest to clinicians and Medical sites of interest) cover pages that are of relevance to a number of DSM–IV disorders. There is unfortunately no index, which makes it difficult to find entries in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Any book like this will have problems keeping up with the Net as new pages appear and others are taken down rapidly. It is inevitable (as the authors admit in the introduction) that some of the addresses given will be out of date and other newer pages will be omitted.

For each page, there is the address and title and a short description of the content. For some there is a brief indication of the authors' view too, for example, "good explanation of . . ." I could find no adverse comments in any entry (perhaps this reflects counselling in California) and the authors make no attempt to explain the criteria they use. Some sites have one or two stars against the entry, which I assumed to be an indication of overall quality.

My concern was that the book would have an American bias. In fact, there were a number of good UK sites mentioned, including Martin Briscoe's Computers in mental health and OXAMWEB. Alas, the Royal College of Psychiatrists' page is not included, but this may well be due to recent appearance.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the book, and found it very useful (it is well thumbed already). It is helpful in finding relevant sites, although rather weak on evaluating how meaningful they are. However, anyone who uses the Net for mental health purposes will find much in it to make a purchase worthwhile.

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