

Foundations of Clinical Psychiatry, 2nd Edition

Editors: Bloch S, Singh BS.
Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2001.
US\$ 65.95; pp608; ISBN 0-522-84924-5

This textbook provides a comprehensive overview of all topics required for undergraduate teaching. Psychiatric trainees and general practitioners will also find this book useful because of its concise layout and abundance of tables, figures and case examples.

The book consists of 4 sections. The first section is an introduction in which a general approach to psychiatry is outlined. Of particular interest, chapter 2 uses the case of Vincent van Gogh to illustrate a multidimensional approach to psychiatric problems, while chapter 3 employs several case examples to explain the ethical dimension of psychiatric practice.

The second part is a basic account of the clinical conditions which psychiatrists commonly treat. The material in this section is comprehensive, accurate, and easy to understand. The third part covers special patient groups and specific settings. Chapters on indigenous mental health and transcultural

and refugee psychiatry are useful in view of today's highly mobile societies. The last section focuses on general principles and details of treatment.

Because of the rapid advances in our knowledge of psychiatry, it is difficult to keep any textbook updated unless frequent revisions are made. However, *Foundations of Clinical Psychiatry* may be the most suitable introductory text to clinical psychiatry for students of medicine and other health sciences.

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Principles and Practice of Psychopharmacotherapy, 3rd Edition

Authors: Janicak PG, Davis JM, Preskorn SH, Ayd FJ Jr.
Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia, 2001.
GB£99.00; pp700; ISBN: 0-7817-2794-4

This multi-author book presents many of the advances in psychopharmacology that have been made during the past decade. The book organises an abundant amount of information into user-friendly, easy-to-read clinical therapeutic strategies, which makes it a useful compendium for psychiatrists.

The authors formulate 7 guiding principles of psychopharmacology in chapter 1. All of these are important but some, for example, "pharmacotherapy alone is generally insufficient for complete recovery", are scarcely highlighted in the introductory chapters of similar textbooks. Chapter 1 (*General Principles*), chapter 2 (*Assessment of Drug Efficacy and Relevant Clinical Issues*), and chapter 3 (*Pharmacokinetics*) form the cornerstone of the book. Together they demarcate the role of drug therapy and describe how information about psychopharmacology is gathered together with

the fundamental pharmacokinetic principles that are applied throughout the text.

These are followed by 10 information-packed chapters providing extensive coverage of antipsychotics, antidepressants, electroconvulsive therapy and other somatic therapies, mood stabilisers, and antianxiety and sedative-hypnotic agents. Most of these drug groups are presented in pairs, i.e. a chapter on their indications coupled with a chapter about the use of the same agents. Each chapter on indications begins with a review of the state of current knowledge about the aetiology, course, biology, and genetics of the disorders to be treated. As mentioned in the foreword, these sections alone would make this book useful to residents reviewing material before taking their psychiatric boards examination or even to practising psychiatrists to brush up their knowledge.

The chapters about the use of psychotropic agents are truly evidence-based. For example, the authors quoted data from 529 references when compiling 1 single chapter on treatment with antipsychotic drugs!

It is therefore not surprising that they cover virtually everything about drug therapy including the mechanisms of action, strategies for both acute and maintenance drug therapy, treatment of psychiatric conditions, the efficacy of different agents, potential side effects, drug interactions, alternative treatment strategies, and even a brief account of the evolution of each drug group. Moreover, the content of the chapters is remarkably up-to-date. There are detailed descriptions of the newest drugs in this encyclopaedia of psychopharmacology. The inclusion of tabulated data, graphs, algorithms, and case examples makes it even more reader-friendly.

Chapter 14 concludes the book by describing assessment and treatment of psychiatric disorders in special populations: for instance, pregnant women, alcohol abusers, and patients with personality disorders, eating disorders, human

immunodeficiency virus, and terminal diseases, as well as children, adolescents, and elderly people. Last but not least, the authors include a series of diagrams in the appendices to illustrate the salient diagnostic criteria in DSM-IV pertinent to each diagnostic category. This enhances the discussion in the text on the indications for pharmacotherapy.

However, there is one important omission in this book. It does not contain the recent advances in the treatment of dementia. Antidementia agents such as donepezil, rivastigmine, and galantamine are not mentioned in this otherwise comprehensive compendium. Despite this shortcoming, it is still a good choice as an updated and practical guide to psychopharmacology.

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Current Issues in the Psychopharmacology of Schizophrenia

*Editors: Breier A, Tran PV, Herrera JM, Tollefson GD, Bymaster FP.
Lippincott Williams & Wilkins Healthcare, Philadelphia, 2001.
US\$42.95; pp579; ISBN 0-7817-2422-8*

This is an excellent book. It is a multi-editor (5 editors), multi-author (63 authors) American book. The outcome is a hard-covered, relatively thick book with 579 pages. Apart from the Introduction and the Index, there are 34 chapters. The contents are presented in 6 sections.

Section I is on *Basic Pathophysiology*, with 4 chapters on *Neurotransmitters*, *Neuroanatomy*, *Neurodevelopment*, and *Neuropathology*.

Section II is about *Neurobehavioural Pharmacology*, with 6 chapters on *Dopamine*, *Pharmacogenetics*, *Animal Models*, *Neuroimaging*, *Neurophysiology and Psychophysiology*, and *Neurocognition*.

Section III is on *Second Generation Antipsychotics*, with 5 chapters on *Clozapine*, *Olanzapine*, *Risperidone*, *Quetiapine*, and *Sertindole*.

Section IV is on *Novel Therapeutic Strategies*, with 5 chapters on *Partial Dopamine Agonists*, *Serotonin*, *Glutamate*, *Muscarinic Agonists*, and *Neuropeptides*.

Section V is on *Clinical Issues*, with 8 chapters on *Childhood-onset Schizophrenia*, *Predictors of Schizophrenia*, *Positive/Negative Symptoms and Beyond*, *Geriatric Schizophrenia*, *Long-term Management*, *Suboptimal Treatment Response*, *Ethnic Issues*, and *Pharmacoeconomics*.

Section VI is on *Special Issues*, with 6 chapters on *Gender Issues*, *Comorbid Mood Disorders*, *Dementia in Schizophrenia*, *Movement Disorders*, *Psychopharmacology in Japan*, and *Social Reintegration*.

The Benefits

Comprehensiveness is assured by the wide array of topics that have been chosen, from the basic sciences to clinical issues, from current new drugs to potential future drugs, from pharmacoeconomics to ethnic-cultural issues and finally, ending the book with a chapter on integrating the pharmacological and the non-pharmacological approaches in the management of schizophrenia. The result is a book that appears almost like an encyclopaedia.

All the chapters are evidence-based and fully referenced. I am amazed by the amount of recent research that has been done and which had escaped my notice before I read this book.

The book certainly conveys an impression that this is the state-of-the-art on this subject. Although a lot of facts remain uncertain, the reader is left with a feeling that all the pieces of this jigsaw puzzle will one day be in place.

Despite this, reading through this book need not be particularly laborious because each chapter always starts with something basic before moving to the advanced information. Both novices and veterans will be able to understand and benefit, and find the book interesting to read.

Each chapter was written by experts in that field. Some of the more famous authors include Nancy Andreasen, John Kane, Jeffrey Lieberman, Carol Tamminga, and Daniel Weinberger.

One of the advantages of a multi-author book is that each chapter can stand alone as a reference to one specific topic if the reader does not have time to go through the whole book. On the other hand, good editorship is shown by the meaningful and coherent relationships between the 34 chapters. Despite the large number of authors, duplication of contents is surprisingly non-apparent. The style of presentation of each chapter is also remarkably consistent.

It is interesting to note 4 Chinese names (Drs Ho, Lin, Lin, and Pi) among the authors.

The Drawbacks

Perhaps the biggest disadvantage of this book is the strong pharmaceutical company influence amongst the editors and authors. At least 3 editors and 7 authors work at Eli Lilly and Co and it would be natural for the reader to look for evidence of bias as a result. Indeed, this book has put the 'atypical' antipsychotics in a much better light than the 'conventional' drugs and, among the 'atypical' drugs,

olanzapine is given a better light than risperidone. I don't mean that these statements are automatically untrue, but they would be more convincing if written in a book without such an involved influence. Likewise, ziprasidone and iloperidone are briefly referred to, with no specific chapters about them.

There are also a number of printing errors, including 'Alzhcimer' instead of 'Alzheimer', 'fight-or-fight' instead of 'fight-or flight', 'crased' instead of 'erased' and, in one Table, 'No Impairment' should be a separate heading rather than embedded inside 'Mild Impairments'. There is also some confusion in the use of italics among the headings and sub-headings and Table numbers are not always accurate. In addition, there is an error in the alphabetical order of the list of Contributing Authors.

Conclusion

Overall, this is an excellent book, and counts among one of the best books I have ever read. I have learned a lot from reading it, and would highly recommend it to anybody who wants to keep up to date with the psycho-pharmacology of schizophrenia.

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