

# Handbook of Emergency Psychiatry

*Editor: Jorge R Petit.*

*Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2004.*

*US\$39.95; pp 340; ISBN 0-7817-4382-6.*

The book measures 11 x 20 cm — approximately the size of a VHS cassette with three-quarters of its thickness. It should therefore fit well in the pocket of a white coat. Despite its small size, as the print is small and a lot of the content is written in point form, the book contains a surprising amount of material.

The main content of the book is arranged in alphabetical order and covers a huge area from abnormal movements to withdrawal phenomenon. Mnemonics are often used to help the reader. Since the book is not meant to be a standard textbook but rather a quick, handy reference, it includes little material on basic science and clinical concepts. The majority of the book covers practical management of everyday clinical problems. References are up to date.

There are only a few controversial statements. In describing the management of violence, the author recommends: “Use agents described later all in one syringe, thus avoiding

the need to give an agitated or violent patient more than one IM [sic] at a time and minimizing needle-stick injuries”. The agents in question include benzodiazepines and traditional and atypical antipsychotics. I found this advice rather unsatisfactory and consulted my hospital pharmacist who advised not to follow this recommendation. In such cases, readers may like to exercise their own discretion.

Otherwise, I found the book useful and practical. A copy on the ward rather than in the library is recommended.

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