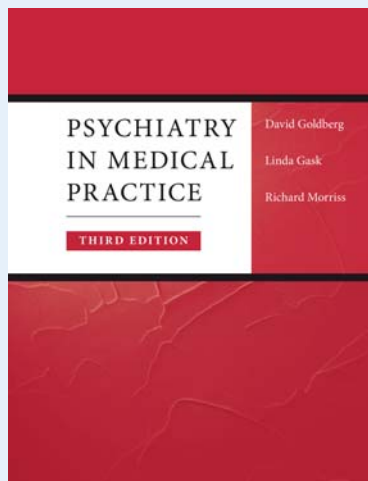


Psychiatry in Medical Practice (3rd edn)

David Goldberg, Linda Gask, Richard Morriss
Routledge 2008
Price £22.99. Pp 387
ISBN 9780415425445

This is the fully updated third edition of a well-established textbook, with two new editors (Gask and Morriss) and a substantial revision has been undertaken. Particular note has been made of the changes in medical education, and there are numerous tables, for example using boxes for issues like the 10-minute history and mental state or ‘units of alcohol’. Its focus is on students coming up to their finals exams, but it should also be a useful introduction for those



planning to move on to psychiatry or general practice. Given psychiatry’s tendency to its own private language there is a useful glossary, and also a section on problem-based learning questions and the possible answers.

The strength of the book is that it is well organized into three broad sections, namely ‘the clinical approach to the patient’, the various ‘syndromes of disorder’ (i.e. psychoses, psychiatric aspects of physical disease) and personality disorders, and its third part relates to ‘disorders related to stages of life cycle’. This includes childhood, sexual disorders and disorders of older people.

Compared to previous editions the new introductions are on risk assessments (a sad reflection of our times) and on the mental health

services (which have also changed substantially). In the former there are very useful summaries of the process of assessing suicide risk and the relevant factors, with a clear warning that assessing risk of serious harm requires help from more experienced clinicians.

This book is written in good, plain English, covers the essentials of psychiatry in terms of aetiology, diagnosis and treatment, and is not afraid to stray from the accepted. For example with regard to a personality disorder the authors are clear that this is not an illness, and they are aware that the distinction between having and not having a personality disorder, for example, is arbitrary to some degree.

Overall this is an up-to-date, accessible and well-referenced textbook, the sort of straightforward resource that GPs and physicians should have at hand, as a quick update or refresher on what psychiatry is about.

Trevor Turner, Homerton University Hospital, London

Asbestos and its Diseases

John E Craighead, Allen R Gibbs
Oxford University Press 2008
Price £44.00. Pp 403
ISBN 978 0 19 517869 2

Asbestos-related pulmonary and pleural disease is commonly seen or considered by most respiratory physicians, often causing undue consternation among patients where X-ray reports on pleural plaques loosely mention ‘asbestosis’.

This book goes into great detail about the precise nature of asbestos fibres, explaining the differences in bio-persistence and predisposition to disease between the different types by way of their chemistry, and provides an illuminating history of the recognition of asbestos-related diseases.

There are excellent chapters on benign pleural and parenchymal disease, malignant diseases of the pleura and peritoneum, and the association with lung cancer. Although the preface states that ‘it is certainly not bedside reading at the end of a long day’, I found most of the chapters written in an easy narrative style.

This book provides an excellent in-depth current account of asbestos and its

diseases. I can thoroughly recommend it to respiratory physicians and trainees.

James Finnerty, Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Chester

Essential Notes for Medical and Surgical Finals

Kaji Sritharan, Jonathan Rohrer, Alexandra C Rankin, Sachi Sivananthan Radcliffe 2008
Price £19.99. Pp 219
ISBN 978 1 846191 695

This small, easy-to-read book manages to cover the main clinical topics required for finals. It is intelligently divided and subdivided with each condition having clearly defined ‘features’, ‘investigations’ and ‘management’.

It reads like well-written, concise revision notes. It misses the depth required for reference or for learning through understanding rather than by rote. However, this is clearly a revision book and there is rarely a wasted word.

The authors have a relaxed writing style which helps it to read well. With complicated

conditions it cuts to the chase and serves up the main points, bringing comprehension, not confusion, before your exam. Some may find the uniform text monotonous, and notably the dermatology and infectious disease chapters were markedly limited by the lack of pictures.

The book classifies causes of conditions in a way that aids ordered memorisation, using the surgical sieve or via mnemonics. Examiners have some favourite conditions and tests – rest assured, these are all included. Even the acute management of emergencies is crammed in.

This is a surprisingly comprehensive book of revision notes particularly suited

to those who don’t make their own. It consolidates the vitals, and ‘gems of knowledge’ are in abundance. If you don’t need colours or pictures I’d recommend making a start on this with a month to go. Having recently passed my finals and completed a 4-month teaching fellowship I would happily recommend this book.

Ben Allen, Northern General Teaching Hospital, Sheffield

