

A clinician's brief guide to the Mental Health Act

Tony Zigmond
 RCPsych Publications 2011
 Price £18.00. Pp 126
 ISBN 978 1 908020 02 4

This is an excellent book from an author who is a recognized authority on mental health law and ethics. It is ambitious in trying to find a balance between covering the ground and remaining succinct and readable. It seems at first glance an improbably slight text and scarcely 90 pages is given over to the main part of its task with the remainder for appendices. For those not practising in Wales the 17 pages devoted to the specifics of mental health law

there leaves one with a sense of being short changed.

As one would expect the text is beautifully written and usefully gives background information on the evolution of statutes to cover mental health law and the burgeoning subject of capacity legislation and human rights. In parts it is dense and one senses the author enjoys fleshing out the topic by detailing his grasp of the evolution of legal provision and the reasoning behind such developments.

If the brief was to keep the book slim it has been achieved but at a cost of making



the reader stay alert as some of the complexities of legislation, in particular the relationship between the Mental Health Act and the Mental Capacity Act, call for one's full attention and a willingness to return to the text to reread paragraphs. This is not the easiest book to dip into, but one should not blame the messenger. The author has produced a book that all mental health professionals would be advised to consider owning.

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Delirium: Acute Confusional States in Palliative Medicine (2nd edn)

Augusto Caraceni, Luigi Grassi
 Oxford University Press 2011
 Price £55.00. Pp 275
 ISBN 978 0 19 957205 2

This neat little book, now in its second edition, is a great little compendium for those wishing for a succinct update and reference book on delirium.

The title implies that this is a specialist book for delirium in palliative care; although it fulfils this role it is of much wider relevance. It focuses to some degree on palliative care issues, as any book on delirium should, but it also easily fulfils the role of a general book on delirium. It is therefore highly relevant to other specialities where delirium is common, such as old age and intensive care medicine. Further, it should also be of interest to general medicine and surgery where delirium is less commonly picked up and less well managed and where there is a greater need for an update on this common and serious condition.

The book covers all the key areas of delirium from the history of the concept to diagnostic issues through to current theories of pathophysiology and of course covering key issues of clinical management. Commendably the importance of family and psychological issues are given appropriate attention. The text is succinct and clear throughout. For a textbook it is surprisingly up to date – including important references from 2010 – which reflect

the authors' eye for detail in updating manuscripts during the invariably slow process of publishing. The 'case reports' (clinical vignettes) scattered through the book add a clinical context to the main text, helping to reinforce the key messages of the book and make the book easier and more interesting to read. My only minor grumble is that the book could do with a more modern and colourful layout to further enhance its readability.

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Practical Procedures in Anaesthesia and Critical Care

Guy Jackson, Neil Soni,
 Christopher Whiten
 Oxford University Press 2010
 Price £34.95. Pp 239
 ISBN 978 0 19 957302 8

Practical Procedures in Anaesthesia and Critical Care provides a colourful, step-by-step guide to performing procedures frequently encountered in anaesthesia and critical care. The content provides quick access to almost all procedures one may encounter within this hands-on specialty. The introduction offers clear advice on how best to use the book in practice.

The first chapter covers the basic principles common to all practical procedures such as aseptic technique, safety and consenting. Subsequent chapters look at monitoring, intravascular access, airway management, thoracic, cardiac, abdominal and neurological procedures. The authors have placed particular emphasis on airway pro-

cedure, especially handy for all grades of anaesthetic and acute medicine trainees.

Each procedure is described using a set format throughout the book, making the information palatable and easy to access. The bullet point format is clear and delivery of the concepts is precise. The authors provide a hands-on guide to the technique in a very simplistic format, emphasizing important points and areas of caution. The final section of each technique contains tips and advice which may prove beneficial even for experienced clinicians.

The book has colourful diagrams, X-rays and photographs, as well as illustrations of surface anatomy. The text also advises how to double check that a procedure has been carried out adequately, with a description of any late complications that may occur.

On the downside, in a few sections the explanations would have benefitted from having diagrams. Most illustrations are helpful, but some of the X-ray images are difficult to interpret as described.

The resuscitation and difficult airway flowcharts are excellent, both as aide memoires and revision guides. The book will also be useful for consolidating one's knowledge after performing a procedure.

This book is not designed to be read from cover to cover, nor should it be used as a first timer's guide to performing what can be relatively dangerous clinical procedures. Nothing beats practice and experienced guidance, but this text is an aide memoire I am glad to have found.

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