

Essentials of Physical Health in Psychiatry

Edited by Irene Cormac and David Gray
RCPsych Publications 2012

Price £35.00. Pp 496

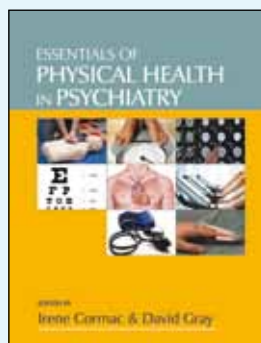
ISBN 978 1 908020 40 6

Sometimes a book captures the zeitgeist in its theme and title, and this is one such book. Physical and mental health are inextricably bound together yet for too long there has been a lack of integration of the approaches required to optimize outcomes especially for people with severe mental illness.

The realization that risk in psychiatry relates as much to cardiovascular risk as it does to suicide risk has been slow in dawning. Psychiatric services, at times beset with accusations of being overly

medicalized and concentrating on risk management within the narrow parameters of suicide, self harm and risk to others, have until recently assumed that others (primary care?) will manage the physical side of care, an assumption that both ignores the difficulties that people with severe mental illness can have in accessing care and minimizes the importance of this to good overall outcomes.

This book consists of a comprehensive series of chapters covering the main areas of physical disease in a practical and readable way. As a multi-author text there are of course variations in quality between chapters but the book contains a number



of useful integrating chapters on topics that are fundamental to improving health outcomes, such as smoking cessation, alcohol reduction, tackling obesity, physical activity, team working and good primary care.

The book would be useful to all professionals working in mental health and primary care and should serve as a statement of intent regarding the integration of these issues into the standard development of plans of care and management for people with mental health problems. The book is wholeheartedly recommended.

Paul Rowlands, Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Chesterfield, Derbyshire

Clinical Pharmacology (11th edn)

Peter N Bennett, Morris J Brown and Pankaj Sharma

Churchill Livingstone Elsevier 2012

Price £49.99. Pp 680

ISBN 978 0 7020 4084 9

Clinical Pharmacology is celebrating its 50th year as one of the essential texts in the field and continues to provide both students and doctors with expert guidance on the principles of evidence-based drug therapy and prescribing. The textbook brings together eminent experts from both the health service and industry.

The text is wide-ranging in scope but organized effectively. The first two sections contain cover general principles such as discovery and development of drugs (an excellent chapter provided by the president of pharmaceutical research and development at GlaxoSmithKline), official regulation of medicines and general pharmacology (an essential introduction to pharmacodynamics and kinetics). The subsequent six sections cover pharmacology in a system-based approach, starting with infection and inflammation and running through the nervous, cardiorespiratory and renal, blood and neoplastic, gastrointestinal and finally endocrine systems.

Each section contains well-structured chapters which, where appropriate, cover mechanisms of drug action, classifications and succinct summaries of the pathophysiology of disease states. Text is well supplemented by diagrams, images and

foot-notes providing references to key papers, additional information or whimsical historical anecdotes (often an excellent diversion). Chapters are also supplemented by guides to further reading.

A single chapter covers neoplastic disease and immunosuppression (compared with five covering the cardiovascular system) and although it is an excellent introduction, this area (which represents a large proportion of current pharmacology research) feels relatively underdeveloped.

Although a textbook such as this is likely to be used mainly as a reference text, it is written in an engaging style and the early 'general' chapters in particular warrant reading in full. I would highly recommend *Clinical Pharmacology* to medical students and all who prescribe medicines.
Marc George, UCLH, London

Oxford Handbook of Paediatrics (2nd edn)

Edited by Robert C Tasker, Robert J McClure, Carlo L Acerini

Oxford University Press 2013

Price £34.99. Pp 1120

ISBN 978 0 19 960830 0

This handbook looks at a wide range of paediatric conditions starting with reading and learning about paediatrics, professional attitudes and epidemiology before moving on to clinical assessment including communication skills, history and examination. Sections on each system of the body then follow as well as genetics, community child

health, child protection, pharmacology, international travel and ethics and the law.

This is a compact handbook packed full of detailed information. The layout is easy to follow and abbreviations are well explained. It is reasonably priced and excellent value, containing as much information as many much more expensive hard-backed textbooks. It has been updated and contains sound treatment advice. Particularly useful are the diagrams in the surgery and ophthalmology sections, X-rays in the neonatal section and computed tomography and magnetic resonance scans in neurology. It is also helpful having blank pages for adding notes. The book is in general well referenced with a few omissions, e.g. Gilbert's syndrome is not referenced but can be found by looking up jaundice in the index.

The downside to the handbook is the poor quality colour photographs in the dermatology section which do little to help understanding of the conditions.

I recommend this comprehensive guide for libraries and for individuals including medical students, specialty trainees undertaking paediatric membership, for GP trainees and those in emergency medicine. It goes beyond what it says on the front cover of 'helping you through your first steps in paediatrics' and as stated in the foreword enables a large amount of information to be digested quickly. Having it as a CD Rom is also helpful.

Helen Goodyear, Health Education West Midlands, Birmingham