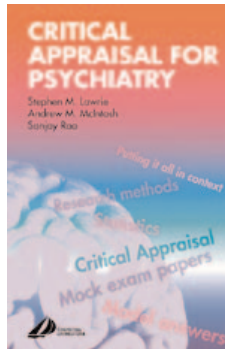


Critical Appraisal for Psychiatry

Stephen M Lawrie, Andrew M McIntosh, Sanjay Rao
Churchill Livingstone 2000
Price £22.95. Pp 271
ISBN 0 443 07017 2

Integrated health care will be grounded in the future on evidence-based practice, the most important aspect of which is critical appraisal. The latter involves generating clinically useful information from valid research which will hopefully lead to a programme of sustained improvements throughout the NHS, being based on more reliable and better information.

This book, aimed at psychiatric trainees sitting their membership examination, attempts to put the concepts of clinical govern-



nance, research methods and critical appraisal into context. Clear guidelines and protocols will need to be in place and accessible in order to be effective. In this respect, the book will be helpful in establishing those ideals. It is not the first of its kind, although it has one major advantage — it is easy to read.

There are chapters on research methodology, statistics and critical appraisal, each chapter concluding with a set of multiple choice questions and answers. The final chapter is devoted to mock exam papers and model answers which psychiatric trainees should find very useful.

Trainees will welcome particular chapters concerned with designing a research project as well as information on case control studies, clinical trials, and cohort studies. Mention is also made of systematic reviews and meta-analysis. There are relevant references at the end of each chapter. This book deserves to be read and I would strongly recommend it.

Francis J Dunne, Warley Hospital, Essex

Helping People with Eating Disorders: A Clinical Guide to Assessment and Treatment

Bob Palmer
John Wiley & Sons 2000
Price £17.99. Pp 273
ISBN 0471 986 27X

When it comes to teaching about eating disorders Bob Palmer is both an unrivaled authority and undoubtedly the world's best raconteur. His language is vividly coloured with striking metaphors. One which I will probably put to good use in my own teaching is when he likens working with someone with anorexia nervosa to watching someone who has half disappeared into

quicksand, who may not be shouting but who may need help. He uses this to illustrate how necessary it is to have a dual focus on health and psychological understanding, both of which are given due merit and attention. Weaving within the more didactic passages are two case histories which bring the focus repeatedly back from the theories to the individual.

This book summarizes all you need to know about starting to work with people with eating disorders in a highly palatable form. It can easily be digested in one or two sittings although repeated savouring is recommended. The references are up to the minute.

Bob has the experience and judgment to lead through the pathways which so easily get tangled by confusing and sometimes prolific, research findings. He works in the NHS and has developed a comprehensive eating disorder service for people living in the East Midlands. Thus cost effectiveness, acceptability and equity are underlying principles. I highly recommend this book to students and experts alike. Bob does not need to worry, he certainly can claim to 'view it all...from his all knowing perspective' and he certainly is not 'pontificating and pronouncing out on a ludicrous limb'.

Janet Treasure, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust

Introduction to Clinical Examination (7th edn)

Michael J Ford, John F Munro
Churchill Livingstone 2000
Price £11.95. Pp 145
ISBN 0443063540

This book is a familiar favourite with medical students from the early clinical years through to finals. Its strength lies in the succinct and straightforward prose that is targeted at the basics of clinical examination and ably supported by clear and relevant diagrams.

The last chapter on general examination is a pleasure to read for its attention to important detail; its clear, systematic approach and



its sense of completeness, which will surely give the confidence to students that is so vital in these early clinical years.

The concise nature of this means that there are some areas in which one might wish for more explanation: for example, palpation of the spleen and Romberg's test. However, these are trivial criticisms of a text that deals superbly with the essential skills which are, more than ever, essential for the development of clinicians who will practise in an environment that is ever more crowded with technological advances. Don't leave home without it.

John Paterson, Scarborough & North East Yorkshire Healthcare Trust