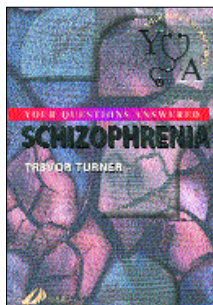


Your Questions Answered: Schizophrenia

Trevor Turner
Churchill Livingstone 2003
Price £19.99. Pp 219
ISBN 0443073473

In this delightful book the author answers over 260 questions that might be posed by doctors or their patients, concerning the phenomenology, aetiology, treatment and prognosis of schizophrenia, a psychiatric disorder affecting at least 1 in 100 people worldwide.

Turner's account is informed by considerable experience. While there are the standard graphs and figures describing age of onset, geographical consistency and brain systems implicated in its symptoms (such as hearing voices), what refreshes is the level of clinical detail, not least the 'rules of thumb'. For instance, on the home visit, look out for the windows shrouded in blankets or the TV set dismembered. We are used to seeing



these things but it is unusual to be reminded of them. While balancing the risks of admitting the personality disordered individual in casualty, who might only raise the stakes if denied access, Turner reflects honestly: 'current risk management policies mean they have to be admitted because to do the alternative is, potentially, to ruin one's career'.

Turner is enlightening on delusional disorders, which must be accurately differentiated from schizophrenia. He rehearses some classic definitions of psychiatry (what does 'paranoid' really mean?). However, it is hard to define 'thought broadcast', 'pseudo-hallucination' or 'formal thought disorder' in ways that will satisfy all psychiatrists, and the pharmacology of aripiprazole requires revision. Nevertheless, this is a useful, pocket-sized text, which trainees and generalists might delve into often and patients and their families find suffused with therapeutic optimism.

Sean A Spence, University of Sheffield

The High Altitude Medicine Handbook (3rd edn)

Andrew J Pollard, David R Murdoch
Radcliffe Medical Press Ltd 2003
Price £23.50. Pp 193
ISBN 1857758498

In the high mountains of the world, visitors are privileged to encounter some of the most wonderful scenery on the planet but also place themselves at risk from altitude illness caused by the decreased oxygen levels associated with increasing elevation.

High altitude medicine is well served by major textbooks from the UK and US but this book admirably fills a different niche: the practical basic handbook. The focus is squarely on prevention, recognition and treatment of the medical problems likely to be encountered in remote environments at high altitude.

The principal high altitude illnesses (acute mountain sickness, high altitude pulmonary oedema and high altitude cerebral oedema) are well covered, as are other more minor altitude-related complaints. Content is broad for a compact volume and includes children at altitude, pregnancy and contraception, cold, heat, training and nutrition, travel medicine, medicolegal issues and preparation of first aid kits.

The authors are established experts in the field and both are widely respected for their research and writing. This is the third edition in 7 years and the popularity of this book speaks for itself. It is an accurate, succinct, easy to read yet authoritative guide – a 'must-buy' for any medic planning a visit to high altitudes. A pocket-sized version is also available.

Mike Grocott, University College London

Teaching Made Easy: a Manual for Health Professionals (2nd edn)

Kay Mohanna, David Wall,
Ruth Chambers
Radcliffe Medical Press 2004
Price £24.95. Pp 223
ISBN 1857758714

At a meeting of medical educators recently, I found myself inventing a new phrase: educational governance. Having invented it, I then wanted to push the genie inside the bottle. Governance, as we know, is a two-edged implement. It can cut down incompetent practice, but it can accidentally hack away imagination, individuality and creative risk-taking.

In the new edition of this popular book, the authors recognize that the

world of education for health professionals has changed utterly as developments like the *NHS Plan* and the European Working Time Directive set an entirely new context for education and training. It is a context where those with a teaching role in the health service (i.e. all of us) can reasonably be expected to have a working knowledge of educational theory, learning styles, effective methods for promoting learning, and the meaning of terms like mentorship and supervision. Their book covers a wide range of educational concepts for educators in the health professions, as well as addressing issues like curriculum development and how to give feedback effectively.

In spite of this, what I most appreciated were the quirky and personal ideas that bloomed among the nicely laid out checklists and diagrams. I would especially recommend the chapter on 'Matching methods with message'. This contains the warning: 'You will feel uncomfortable if you think your clothes are too tight, too short or your underwear is visible'. For me, such advice is worth any amount of educational governance.

John Launer, Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust, London