

BOOK REVIEW

Psychiatry: An evidence-based text

Edited by Basant Puri and Ian Treasaden; ISBN: 9780340950050, Hodder Arnold, London, UK, 2010, Pages: 1323

Rapid progress in the basic and clinical neuroscience in the recent years has led to information explosion. To keep oneself abreast of the recent developments in the related fields is a challenging task. The development in basic sciences has helped in better understanding of many clinical conditions. As a result of which clinicians are expected to deliver 'high quality cost-effective patient-focused care based upon best evidence available.' The book "Psychiatry: An evidence-based text" is likely to help the reader to achieve this goal.

This book attempts to provide an integrated overview of current knowledge of Psychiatry. The contributions from 84 authors, some of whom are acknowledged international leaders in their respective fields and pioneer in shaping psychiatric research and practice, are compiled in this evidence based text book.

Evidence-based medicine (EBM) is defined as the process of systematically finding; appraising and using contemporaneous research data as the basis for clinical decisions¹. The debate for and against evidence based practice is still going on. There has long been a tension between research and clinical practice, which are viewed respectively as inhabiting 'an ivory tower' and 'the real world'. EBM seeks to remedy this by joining research to best clinical practice². It emphasizes the importance of sound scientific methods and the use of the best available information, generally that derived from well-designed and carefully interpreted research studies. The evidence-based approach de-emphasizes intuition and unsystematic clinical experience applied without integrating empirical evidence. Treatments should not be whimsical, neither should they be driven by fashion, tradition or advertising. Perhaps the most compelling reason to adopt an evidence-based approach is an ethical obligation to support patients and families in making informed choices about medical decisions³. Rapid advancements in information technology have facilitated the development of evidence-based medicine. A clinician can now swiftly extract information relevant to a clinical question. At the same time to get rid of unwanted information is becoming a

major concern in this era of information explosion. This text book has made the task much easier. Though the text book is based on the syllabus of MRCPsych in UK and Ireland, this book will be useful for trainees of psychiatry elsewhere. Basic sciences related to psychiatry e.g. Research methodology, epidemiology, psychology, neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neuroendocrinology, neurochemistry, neuropathology, neuroradiology and genetics are presented in a succinct manner in the initial chapters. Clinical disorders and their various modalities of treatment are described comprehensively emphasizing the evidence underlying theory and practice. Though the book is written for the trainees of MRCPsych, but it will be useful for all students of psychiatry and allied disciplines around the globe as well as for consultant psychiatrist for ready reference.

The book is thoughtfully divided into 79 chapters under 8 parts for better organization. Chapters are standardized and cross referenced and it includes important and up to date references. The generous use of tables, figures, boxes and pictures has made the book reader-friendly. The major learning points at the end of the chapter will help the students for recapitulation. Though the chapters are written by a galaxy of authors, the overlapping in content is negligible. But contents of few chapters suffered for preference of brevity for which it may not fulfill the expectation of some readers and they have to consult some other source for detail. The chapter on Risk assessment is helpful for all clinician. Topics like assessment of disability and rights of mentally ill are totally ignored. In a nutshell it is true that the editor succeeded in the attempt to provide the sound foundation of evidence-based theoretical knowledge required for psychiatric practice.

REFERENCES

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