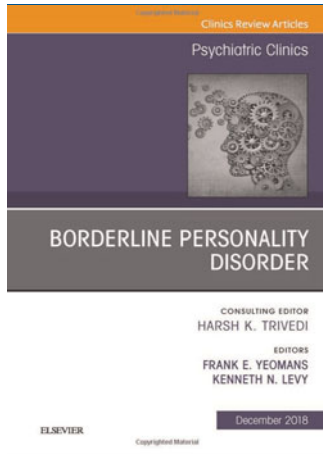


Book reviews

Edited by Allan Beveridge and Femi Oyebo




Borderline Personality Disorder (Psychiatric Clinics of North America, vol. 41, issue 4)

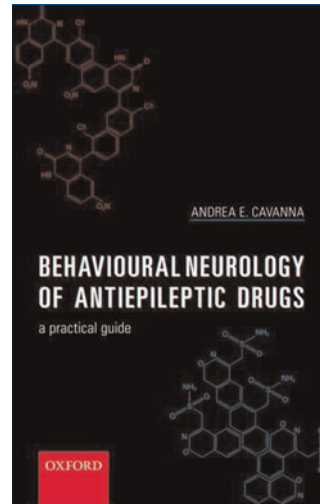
Edited by Frank Yeomans and Kenneth Levy
Elsevier, 2018. 510 pp. £73.99 (hb).
ISBN 9780323642132

This is a rich collection of papers that I strongly recommend for trainees and seniors alike. Over the past decade, there have been really useful developments in the study of personality function and its disorders and Yeomans & Levy are to be congratulated for commissioning reviews that provided excellent summaries of the current state of play in terms of evidence, as well as raising questions for further research. The preface alone is helpful, but a highlight for me was the introduction by Otto Kernberg, who argues for a truly biopsychosocial approach to understanding all disorders of personality, not just borderline personality disorder. Other highlights include the review by Buchheim & Diamond about the relationship between attachment insecurity and affect dysregulation and the evidence for the mediating role of amygdala dysfunction; and the lucid and pragmatic chapter on treatment by Levy *et al*, which concludes that probably all techniques are effective for symptom reduction and implies (without directly stating this) that professional competition between the different ‘schools’ of therapy is outdated.

Such books are valuable because there are still mental health professionals out there (including psychiatrists, I’m sad to say) who claim that personality disorders either (a) do not exist as disorders but are just ‘stigmatising labels’ or (b) are disorders but not the kind that mental health services should help. Particularly malignant comments about personality disorder include statements such as ‘It’s not mental illness’ or ‘It’s just behavioural’ (neither of which is meaningful without elaboration) and the grim ‘We’re not commissioned to provide services for this’, which in the UK’s National Health Service is both false and illegal. Space does not permit a discussion of how such attitudes arise (although this book has a useful chapter about stigma and patient experience); but the best way to change such views is to educate professionals and empower them to help people with borderline personality disorder with the same confidence and compassion they extend to any other patients. Books such as this make valuable contributions to stigma reduction and we need more of them.

Gwen Adshead , Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist, Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust, HMAPPs, Ravenswood House, Mayles Lane, Fareham, Southampton PO17 5NA, UK. Email: g.adshead@nhs.net

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Behavioural Neurology of Antiepileptic Drugs: A Practical Guide

By Andrea E. Cavanna
Oxford University Press, 2018.
\$38.95 (pb). 180 pp.
ISBN: 9780198791577

Anti-epileptic drugs are widely prescribed in neurology and psychiatry. They represent first-line treatment in epilepsy, but they are now also used in headaches, pain, bipolar disorder and anxiety and there is increasing evidence in movement disorders and impulse control. It is therefore evident that any practising neurologist or psychiatrist has or will have patients taking at least one of these drugs.

This is a pocket-sized user-friendly guide covering 23 anti-epileptic drugs in terms of basic pharmacology (i.e. mechanism of action, pharmacokinetics and interactions) as well as clinical indications, side-effects, need for therapeutic drug monitoring, posology and titration. All drugs are listed in alphabetical order, making the book easily and quickly accessible.

The book is specifically linked to the UK’s National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines for epilepsy (2012) and current licensed indications in psychiatry but it is also linked to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) in terms of regulations regarding, for example, the prescription of generic formulations. In that regard, there is no mention of the current MHRA regulations about valproate in women of childbearing age, such as the Pregnancy Prevention Programme and the Annual Risk Acknowledgment Form, but this is probably because the book was written before the MHRA guidance was issued. However, the section on pregnancy in the chapter on valproate lists all major points regarded as best clinical practice, including the need to discuss neurodevelopmental malformations with the patient, prescription of valproate only if it is the sole therapeutic option and use of the lowest effective dose.

Side-effects are correctly classified according to pharmacoepidemiological classes and this is quite helpful when advising patients about rare side-effects.

Each drug is also discussed in terms of behavioural tolerability in epilepsy and this is another helpful feature. In fact, it is now established that people with epilepsy can develop psychiatric adverse events during treatment with anti-epileptic drugs. There is also a brief chapter summarising psychiatric problems in epilepsy.

As stated by the author, this guide was developed for behavioural neurologists and neuropsychiatrists dealing with people with epilepsy but there is no doubt that it can be of great value for any neurologist or psychiatrist prescribing this class of medication and it can be of interest also to pharmacists. Neurology and psychiatry trainees will find this guide very informative and of great value in their training.

Marco Mula , Consultant in Neurology and Epileptology, Atkinson Morley Regional Neuroscience Centre, St George’s University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust; and Reader in Neurology, Institute of Medical and Biomedical Education, St George’s, University of London, UK. Email: mmula@sgul.ac.uk

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