

and two give a brief background about the disorder and introduce the concepts and methodology of psychoeducation. Part three gives details of the Barcelona Psychoeducation Program, which is one of the few evidence-based psychological treatment models for bipolar disorders.

This is mainly a 'how to' book giving clear, practical guidance about when to introduce psychoeducation. The Barcelona Program consists of 21 sessions each lasting one and a half hours. The sessions are clearly described with goals, procedures, useful tips and patient material. Francesc's personal commitment to the treatment of patients with bipolar illness also comes through. They are given explicit encouragement and permission to ring if they are worried about possible relapses and provided with information about how and when to contact him. Such patients are not easy to treat. Therapists need to be committed clinicians who are familiar with the disorder. It is made clear in the book that this is an intensive and complex psychoeducation programme. Furthermore, the authors advise that 8 patients will be the optimal number for the group, but that it is sensible to start with 12 to 14, allowing for drop-outs. Moreover, patients have to be stable for 6 months with a Young Mania Rating Scale score <6 (Hamilton Depression Rating Scale score <8).

The authors are also appropriately realistic about the objectives of working with individuals with bipolar disorder. Some goals such as awareness of disorder, early detection of warning symptoms and adherence to treatment are aimed at every patient in the group. Others such as controlling stress, avoiding substance use and misuse, and achieving regularity in lifestyle are described as 'desirable and not exclusively the responsibility of the psychoeducation program' whereas improving social and interpersonal activity between episodes

and confronting residual sub-syndromic symptoms and impairment are described as part of an 'excellent scenario' of treatment outcome.

To sum up, the authors have done a brilliant job in developing such a thorough psychoeducation programme. I would recommend anyone interested in working with patients with bipolar illness to buy this book.

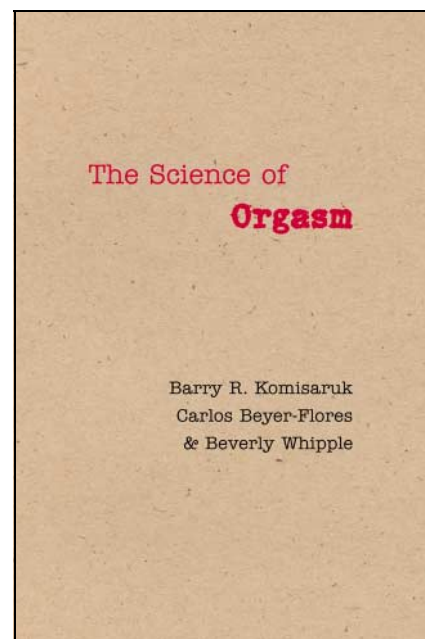
Dominic Lam Hertford Building, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, UK. Email: d.lam@hull.ac.uk
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The Science of Orgasm

By Barry R. Komisaruk, Carlos Beyer-Flores & Beverly Whipple. Johns Hopkins University Press. 2006. 376pp. US\$25.00 (hb). ISBN 0801808490X

Sex fascinates us all and now it seems that everyone has a view. The media abounds with advice about sex from doctors, psychologists and therapists who jostle for recognition. But despite the surfeit of advice there is little science. The problems of taboo and censorship have been replaced by one of validity. This book provides information from the best available evidence. Talk of sex being as strenuous as walking up stairs or walking a mile does not pack the same punch as how many patients have a heart attack 'in the saddle'. Even in the priapic, post-Viagra age the figure seems low: 1.5% of 1700 cited in the chapter titled 'are orgasms good for your health'.

The authors are a professor of psychology, of nursing, and the head of a laboratory. They have proceeded from definition to physiology and pathophysiology, and the effect of prescribed and elicit drugs. They review the research into the endocrinology and the neurology of sex in both



the intact and damaged brain. The information from imaging is assessed. All the while the authors have not strayed beyond what is in the literature.

The instruction does not crowd out the entertainment. They have an eye for the intimate when a researcher's erection, induced by a self-administered alpha blockade, 'is entirely undiminished by concentration on exacting intellectual tasks . . . I took an urgent and worrying telephone call without losing the erection'. One presumes the caller was unaware.

The authors should be congratulated on taking the trouble to produce a readable comprehensive account of the literature on orgasm. All psychosexual clinics will need to have a copy as well as anyone who advises others about psychosexual problems.

Nick Dunn The Ladywell Unit, University Hospital Lewisham, London SE13 6LW, UK.
Email: nick.dunn@slam.nhs.uk
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