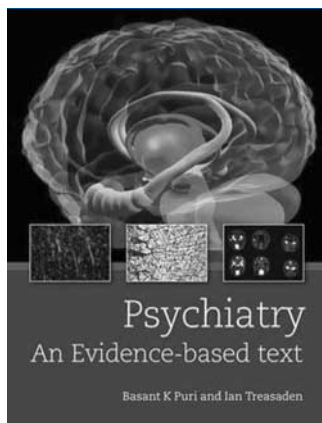


Given the book's subtitle, such an inexhaustive approach is disappointing but perhaps inevitable as we know already there are not enough health economics studies to fill a whole book. Nevertheless, this is a good compendium of research and is generally up to date. The discussions have a strong US bias, but unlike many books of this type there is a reasonable coverage of non-American studies. The emphasis on diagnosis, however, limits the book too much, although a good chapter on medical conditions mitigates this.

For anyone trying to convince service commissioners that non-drug treatments are effective this book is invaluable. It argues cogently that psychotherapy can be cost-effective, but that is a big step from saying that it always will be, as cost-effectiveness depends crucially on how a service is delivered.

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Psychiatry: An Evidence-Based Text

Edited by Basant K. Puri
& Ian Treasaden.
Hodder Education. 2009.
£125.00 (hb). 1323pp.
ISBN: 9780340950050

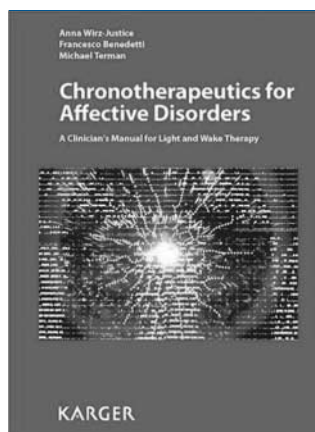
This is the newest addition to the standard texts for trainees preparing for the MRCPsych examination in the UK and Ireland. The breadth of topics covered is impressive and includes a history of psychiatry, basic psychology, statistics, neurosciences (including neuroimaging and anatomy), mental disorders, and medical and psychological management. The book touches on clinical specialties, management of mental health services and legal and ethical aspects of psychiatry, as well as subjects infrequently covered in other texts: emergency psychiatry, chronic pain and palliative care. Some of the chapters are supplemented with a reading list.

The book makes abundant use of tables, images and summary boxes. The sections on basic psychology and psychological therapies are likely to be sufficient for those preparing for the MRCPsych exam. This may sweeten the pill of the hefty price tag and obviate the need for additional textbooks. In the chapters covering mental illness, common pathologies are covered alongside the less common ones: psychosexual disorders and paraphilia. The sections on functional disorders are extensive and, rather perturbingly, the chapter on multiple chemical sensitivities is considerably longer than the one on schizophrenia. The ICD-10 and DSM-IV criteria are provided for some disorders but omitted in others. This may prove frustrating to those preparing for exams who wish to have all the relevant information to hand.

Despite these few shortcomings, this book will provide a solid reference source which can confidently take its place next to its more established rivals.

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Chronotherapeutics for Affective Disorders: A Clinician's Manual for Light and Wake Therapy

By Anna Wirz-Justice,
Francesco Benedetti
& Michael Terman.
Karger. 2009.
US\$48.00 (pb). 116 pp.
ISBN: 9783805591201

This book has three stated aims. The authors present the theory behind chronobiological treatments for affective disorder, document evidence of their efficacy and provide a step-by-step guide to clinicians as to how these therapies might be implemented. My main criticism of the book is that the balance between these three areas may not be optimal.

Manuals should probably instruct readers in how to do something rather than explain in depth why they should do it. However, whereas the guide to the implementation of chronotherapeutic techniques is detailed, the theory underlying these techniques merits expansion and I felt that evidence for their effectiveness was significantly lacking. For example, the efficacy of bright light treatment for non-seasonal depression is affirmed in fewer than 100 words, with only two references. In some European countries, chronotherapeutics are quite widely used and in Milan it is apparently routine for in-patients on medication for non-seasonal depression to receive light therapy and a single session of late-night wake therapy at the start of treatment. By contrast, in the UK, the authors would be preaching chronotherapeutics to the unconverted; most psychiatric professionals will need to know why they are using a treatment, not least because they might be asked by the patient.

Despite these criticisms, I found the book to be useful and engaging. It is well written and elegantly illustrated and it links to an informative website (www.cet.org) for the Center for Environmental Therapeutics, a non-profit agency dedicated to education and research in environmental therapies. The difficulties inherent in researching and promoting such therapies, in contrast to the international resources of the pharmaceutical industry, are noteworthy.

Most psychiatrists will have patients with unipolar or bipolar depression who are resistant to other treatments and this book may help to see them, literally, in a different light. There is a very useful level of detail about light therapy, including ways of estimating the best time of day at which it can be prescribed, since this varies between individuals. Helpful illustrative schedules are