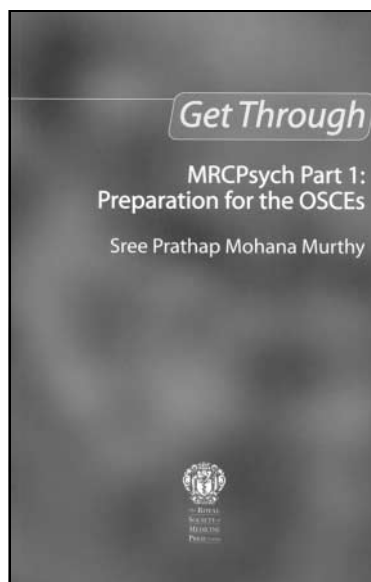




Get Through MRCPsych Part 1: Preparation for the OSCEs

Sree Prathap Mohana Murthy
London: The Royal Society of
Medicine Press Limited, 2004,
£19.95, 201 pp.
ISBN: 1 85315 590 X



This book is primarily for the anxious and worried objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) candidate. Its strength is in providing straightforward guidance to the candidate on how to pass the OSCEs and on the types of task a candidate can expect to face. The need for such a book is obvious, and it is to his credit that the author, as a senior house officer in training, has managed to write one.

However, the book disappoints. There are no references in the text to the facts and a scant bibliography. A large part of the text reads in a conversational vernacular, with rather clumsy English. There are no illustrations, not even an electrocardiogram to interpret; perhaps the examiners won't use one? That said, the basic clinical assessments in which a candidate will need to demonstrate competency are adequately covered. These include the relevant parts of the neurological and general physical examination.

The author's personal interview style and the types of interview question he suggests are clearly evident in the text; he writes as he might speak. This displays an unfortunate looseness on a not infrequent basis. For example, in eliciting delusional perception the author asks, 'Do you think

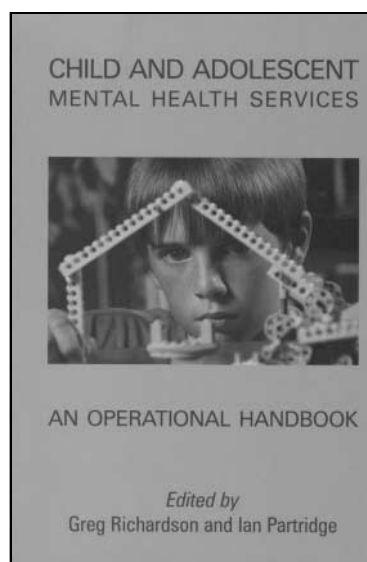
that things happening around you have a special meaning to you?' This approach may fail to capture the essence required here of a normal perception interpreted with delusional self-reference. Perhaps too pedantic the reader may think, but the examiner may be looking for precisely this detail in the candidate to prove that he or she really does understand the symptom well.

The aspiring candidate should certainly become familiar with this book and its contents, but should beware of depending on it as the sole source of his or her knowledge of the subject. To do that would be to be instilled with a false confidence. Perhaps the best use of the book, and its main achievement, is its value as a comprehensive guide to where a candidate must acquire knowledge and skill for success to follow. That will require both reading widely, and many hours of practice at the patient's bedside.

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Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: An Operational Handbook

Greg Richardson & Ian Partridge
(Editors)
London: Gaskell, 2003, £25.00 pb,
214 pp., ISBN: 1 901242 96 X



The authors of this operational handbook have distilled a large amount of knowledge and experience into a relatively small volume. Their stated aim is to provide 'a description of how the nuts and bolts of a

CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service) can be put together to provide a robust, patient-centred, clinically effective practice'. It is aimed at all CAMHS clinicians, their managers and the commissioners. Does it achieve its aims?

The book is at its best in describing the structure and operations of particular services. The various authors manage to specify much of what is sensibly expected and required in a concise and readable fashion. This praise applies across all the services described. The book also contains pointed nuggets of wisdom, for example, the reminder that since adolescent inpatient units are intended for very troubled teenagers, we should expect that many of those teenagers will not be well enough to go home at weekends, and also that the Mental Health Act 1983 might need to be invoked. The chapter on multidisciplinary teamwork is thoughtful and challenging.

However, I had three types of difficulty with the handbook. First, who will find it most useful? On initial reading I thought that this is an ideal book for an intelligent and committed commissioner, new to CAMHS, who wanted to learn quickly and comprehensively about good ways of working and the structures needed to underpin that work. On careful rereading, that remains my view. It strikes me as less useful for clinicians, except at that very important time when we are in negotiation with our commissioners. Second, I had difficulty with some of the individual chapters. The chapter on court reports strikes me as useful to specialist registrars and inexperienced consultants only. The chapter on the law is neither simple enough for the novice nor complex (or accurate) enough to guide the experienced clinician faced with a knotty problem. Third, I was troubled by some inaccuracies, problems with tone, and some significant omissions. It is correct to say that generic counselling is not usually helpful, and may even be unhelpful. However, it is neither fair nor accurate to say that counselling is in 'high demand by parents and adults in the child's world who wish to distance themselves from and pathologise that child'. Perhaps the parents just want help for their child, but don't really know how to ask. With regard to the omissions, there is one mention of the National Service Framework (NSF), and no mention at all of primary care trusts (which commission nearly everything we do now, and which will manage the commissioning in the future) or strategic health authorities (which commission the rest).

These are not major faults, and I am certainly pleased to have this book on my

shelf. I will refer to it when dealing with commissioners, and will lend it to interested commissioners and to specialist registrars who are applying for consultant posts. I am sure that it will best be read in conjunction with the NSF. However, I

hope that the authors will urgently update the handbook, and that they will now provide us with a fresh volume that explicitly takes into account the NSF. If they do so, then we will have a truly powerful operational handbook, and one which will

stand us in good stead for several years to come.

Mark Berelowitz Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust, London



columns

miscellany

The Mental Health Act 1983 Video for Deaf People

This new video, produced in British Sign Language (BSL), is aimed primarily at deaf people whose first or preferred language is BSL, to provide information for those who have a mental health illness/problem. Within the mental health field, there are very few professionals who use BSL. Therefore, deaf people do not consistently get full information in their first or preferred language. This video is a breakthrough in allowing deaf people access to vital information, such as: what would happen if they were detained, and their rights under the Mental Health Act 1983; medication; and how long their stay in hospital would be. The video will also help widen the understanding of hearing professionals who may have little or no knowledge of deaf issues, and in this

respect, it describes how to book interpreters, shows strong deaf role models to promote wider deaf awareness and explains communication tactics, along with other vital information.

This video is an extremely positive step forward; however, there is still a long way to go. There are many areas of information that deaf people have difficulty in accessing. It is hoped that the video will encourage professionals to think about how to get involved in making positive changes in the healthcare of deaf people.

To purchase the video in VHS or DVD format please contact Forest Bookshops (www.forestbooks.com; tel/mini-com: 01594 833 858). For further information please contact the British Society for Mental Health and Deafness (BSMHD): www.bsmhd.org.uk.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists' Eastern Division Research Prize

The College Eastern Division Research Prize was created in 2002 to encourage and reward research in the Eastern Division. It is open to all doctors who are consultants working within the Eastern Division. The closing date for submissions is 1 July 2005. The entries will be judged by three examiners to include the chairman, one executive member and one coopted member. The prize is £500 plus a certificate and will be awarded in November 2005. There will be the opportunity for the researcher to present his/her work at a later academic programme. For further information on the prize please contact the chairman of the Eastern Division, Dr Christopher Mayer (e-mail: christopher.mayer@hnp.nhs.uk).

forthcoming events

Sogn Centre for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry would like to announce **Dynamics of Interaction between Child and Environment – Brain and Mind**, a conference taking place on 23–24 May 2005 in Oslo, Norway. Speakers include Tom O'Connor (USA) and Peter Cooper (England). Conference fee: NOK 2300 (lunch/coffee). For further details please contact Professor Berit Grøholt, Sogn Centre for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, PO Box 26 Vinderen, N-0319 Oslo, Norway (e-mail: berit.groholt@medisin.uio.no). Alternately

visit the following website: <http://www.ssbu.no>.

Longing and Belonging is the title of a group-analytic workshop to be held at and organised by The North London Centre For Group Therapy on 24–26 June 2005. For further information about this event please contact Lesley Holmes (tel: 020 8440 1451; fax: 020 8449 3847).

The European Association for Mental Health in Mental Retardation and the

Spanish Association for Scientific Study on Mental Retardation are the organisers of the following event: **V European Congress: Mental Health in Mental Retardation – Integrating Research and Practice**. This congress will take place in Barcelona, Spain on 6–8 October 2005. For further information please contact: Congress Secretariat–International Meetings; Capitan Arenas, 3; 08034 Barcelona (tel: +34 93 203 92 93; fax: +34 93 280 46 43; e-mail: info@inter-meetings.com; website: www.aeecrm.com).