BOOK REVIEW

Primary Care Psychiatry. EDITED BY DAVID KNESPER, MICHELLE RIBA, AND THOMAS SCHWENK. Philadelphia, Pa: W.B. Saunders Company, 1997. 456 pages, \$41.00.

Anyone who actually practices primary care medicine does not need to be persuaded by the literature that psychiatric disorders are prevalent among patients in the general medical setting. The publishers of medical journals and texts finally seem to have realized this too, as a number of new titles introduced during the last year or so concentrate on the detection and management of psychiatric problems by generalist physicians. Stoudemire and Fogel's *Psychiatric Care of the Medical Patient*, *The MGH Guide to Psychiatry in Primary Care* by Stern and colleagues, and the upcoming American Medical Association-sponsored *Psychiatry for Primary Care Physicians* can all be found on the textbook shelf next to the focus of this review, *Primary Care Psychiatry* edited by Knesper, Riba, and Schwenk. Psychiatrists who want to provide more medical care to their patients ("psychiatric primary care") have fewer resources available to them, such as the journals *Medical Update for Psychiatrists* and the forthcoming *Journal of Medicine and Psychiatry*.

Primary Care Psychiatry is a product of the University of Michigan's faculty in psychiatry, family medicine, and internal medicine. They have chosen a diagnosis-based approach, with chapters on mood disorders, anxiety disorders, adolescent disorders, and so forth making up the majority of the text. Whether this makes for a more clinically useful work than a symptom-based volume such as the *MGH Guide* (which has chapters on the approach to patients with suicidal thoughts, obsessions and compulsions, problematic alcohol use, etc.) depends largely on the reader's preference. Some readers may likewise appreciate the editors' decision to have "selected readings" predominate over specific references at each chapter's end, while others may prefer the more encyclopedic referencing found in texts such as Stoudemire and Fogel's.

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Introductory chapters include discourses on differential diagnosis, psychopharmacology, counseling skills, and referrals for psychiatric care (with a nice discussion on and glossary of managed care issues). A later chapter is devoted to the Internet as a resource for primary care physicians, and similarly contains many definitions that would be useful for the World Wide Web novice. I found several of the appendices helpful, such as the guide to self-help books and the collection of psychiatric drug handouts for patients.

A strength of this textbook is the frequent use of clinical vignettes and sample dialogues with patients, which help translate the principles into practice. Many of these could easily be adapted for standardized patient exercises, allowing learners to try out various approaches in a setting free of patient-outcome consequences (one chapter alone listed seven different "scripts" for overcoming patient resistance). Another good feature is the inclusion of many psychometric scales and diagnostic tools (four depression scales, six alcohol abuse indices, and questionnaires on sexual orientation and gender perception, among others), although some instruments were repeated in different chapters. A few chapters, such as those covering anxiety and psychopharmacology, left me impressed by and grateful for their lucidity, utility, and common sense.

The book displays some of the current deficits inherent in any textbook: a few of the new anti-psychotic agents get only passing mention, the recommendations for antiobesity drugs are outdated, and the use of antidepressants in nondepressed smokers is specifically discouraged (marketing of bupropion for this indication began shortly after publication). Some of the material does not agree with other current standards, such as the suggestion that antidepressants that are not initially effective should first be combined or augmented with other drugs (rather than replaced with another single antidepressant of a different class, as recommended in the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research guidelines). There is also some repetition of material in different chapters by the same authors, but the magnitude of this is small.

This book is a good addition to the field, and differs enough from its competitors to warrant perusal by generalist physicians and learners at all levels interested in the interface between psychiatry and primary care. My preference would be for more thorough referencing of major points, and I suspect that practitioners wanting a quick answer to a specific dilemma may find other texts more useful on a busy clinic day.—**JAMES G. PEDEN, JR, MD**, Departments of Medicine and Psychiatry, East Carolina University School of Medicine, Greenville, NC