
Oxford Textbook of Old Age Psychiatry (4th edition of formerly named Psychiatry in the Elderly)

edited by Robin Jacoby, Catherine Oppenheimer, Tom Dening, and Alan Thomas. Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2008, 798 pages, \$299.00.

Textbooks on geriatric/old age psychiatry are often laborious efforts that, by the time they hit the stands, offer little in terms of new or groundbreaking information. If that is the case, is this new book on old age psychiatry really offering anything “new”?

The *Oxford Textbook of Old Age Psychiatry* is the fourth edition of the former *Psychiatry in the Elderly*, a textbook that has been published since 1991. The book has 2 new editors, Tom Dening and Alan Thomas, and 73 contributors from 8 different countries. The text is divided into 5 sections: “Basic Science,” “Clinical Practice,” “Psychiatric Services,” “Specific Disorders,” and “Sexuality, Ethics, and Medico-Legal Issues.” New chapters include those on “Psychological Treatments,” “Memory Clinics,” “Liaison Old Age Psychiatry,” “Mild Cognitive Impairment,” and “Sleep Disorders in Older People.” The largest section (282 pages), occupying almost a third of the book, covers specific disorders. Particularly impressive are the chapters on psychotherapies and dementias and the sections on the patients’ descriptions of their illnesses. The book adequately reviews topics often given less importance in similar textbooks, including those dealing with older people with intellectual difficulties, sleep disorders, and sexuality issues. Although chapters on legal and ethical issues mainly deal with the British perspective, the general principles underlying these issues can be acceptable to an international audience. All the chapters in the book are well laid out and easy to read with an adequate number of tables, illustrations, and photographs.

Although this book has no glaring omissions, a textbook of this nature would have been well served with a separate chapter on behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia, given its importance in patient care. A chapter dealing with financial issues faced by older patients with mental health problems would have

added more value. Other features that would have enhanced the reputation of the book include its accessibility via a Web site (with access code) and a CD-ROM version for the “computer happy” clinician.

Overall, this new textbook is an excellent value for its money. It provides the reader with up-to-date information without being laborious. It is easy to read and is visually pleasing. There is something for everyone, from the lay person, to the novice clinician, to the seasoned veteran. It is a “must have” for anyone dealing with older patients with mental health problems.

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Financial disclosure: None reported.

doi:10.4088/JCP.09bk05377

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