

## Book Reviews

J. Sloan Manning, M.D., Editor

### Postpartum Mood Disorders

edited by Laura J. Miller, M.D. Washington, D.C., American Psychiatric Press, Inc., 1999, 280 pages, \$38.50.

With the advent of the women's movement, it seems that more and more medical research focuses on the necessity for improving women's health care. While we are moving forward in the area of postpartum mood disorders, the momentum seems to be slower here than in other areas of women's health research. This momentum gained speed when the DSM-IV finally included the postpartum modifier to several psychiatric entities. It is this reader's opinion that *Postpartum Mood Disorders* could be the ignition to spark interest and pick up the pace of research in this area of women's health care.

After having recently plowed through a fair amount of the recent literature on postpartum depression, this book was a pleasure to read, offering much insight into the nature of the disorder. It is a compilation of the research, thoughts, and opinions of many persons from different medical backgrounds. Psychiatry faculty, social workers, postpartum support group facilitators, and even law professors have all contributed chapters. It is this very diversity that gives this publication its strength to inform and educate.

The language is clear, understandable, and definitely targeted toward primary care givers. By their nature, postpartum mood disorders can be unclear or ill defined; however, this book does a very good job with succinct explanations, comparisons, and definitions. The treatment section offers in-depth strategies that seem to be lacking in some areas of the literature available. The most remarkable aspect of this book is its perceptive lessons in psychotherapy, which cover varying types, from interpersonal therapy to couples therapy to self-help therapy. The editors even go so far as to include a chapter on support groups and the great advances that have been made in treatment and prevention by volunteer persons, many of whom have no medical background but do have the background of personal experience.

This text emphasizes psychotherapy as treatment with a limited amount of information regarding medical therapy. The reason for this limitation is the lack of information available, according to the author. Overall, if you are a practicing physician who treats obstetric patients or deals with postpartum patients, this book should find its way into your library.

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### Pocket Handbook of Primary Care Psychiatry

by Harold I. Kaplan, M.D., and Benjamin J. Sadock, M.D.  
Baltimore, Md., Williams & Wilkins, 1996, 486 pages, \$37.00.

The *Pocket Handbook of Primary Care Psychiatry* is a reasonable source of information for primary care physicians, particularly in areas of non-mood disorders such as schizophrenia, anorexia nervosa, or somatoform disorder. The book hits the major highlights, describing patient presentation, treatment, and symptoms requiring further investigation or hospitalization. The book is divided into 3 parts: (1) chapters covering the field of primary care psychiatry, (2) discussions of almost every psychiatric disorder that may be encountered in the office, and (3) strategies for treatment and management of psychiatric disorders. As an example, Chapter 9, titled "Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders," begins with a definition of a brief psychotic disorder then lists the clinical features and diagnosis, interviewing and psychotherapeutic guidelines, evaluation and management, and drug treatment strategies for this illness. The chapter continues for all presentations related to schizophrenia such as hallucinations, illusions, and delusional disorder.

I was somewhat disappointed to note that the book did not include a more in-depth examination and discussion of other illnesses often encountered by primary care physicians, namely bipolar II disorder and cyclothymia. However, given the authors' orientation as practicing psychiatrists and the novelty of bipolar illness as an important entity in primary care, this lack could be expected. The book would better serve primary care physicians if bipolar spectrum conditions and dysthymia were included.

This book functions better as a quick reference for the major psychiatric illnesses that present in an emergency setting. However, for those illnesses that often present in the ambulatory setting, other sources will be needed for clinical guidance.

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