

The Maudsley Handbook of Practical Psychiatry, 4th ed.

edited by David Goldberg, M.D., and Robin Murray, M.D.
Oxford University Press, London, England, 2003, 288 pages,
\$29.95 (paper).

A book described as being about practical psychiatry inevitably suggests there must be a text somewhere that emphasizes impractical psychiatry, but that is probably not the editors' intent here. The adjective *practical* refers to the inclusion of introductory psychiatric knowledge and skills deemed essential for performance by medical students and residents as psychiatric trainees.

Two British professors of psychiatry based at the London Institute of Psychiatry and the Maudsley Hospital edit *The Maudsley Handbook of Practical Psychiatry*, known in Britain as the "Orange Book." The text is an excellent summary of the details of the psychiatric interview, the mental status examination, specialized neuropsychiatric assessments, and basic information about psychotherapeutic and psychopharmacologic treatments, including several standardized questionnaires and lists of medications.

However, the cultural context of psychiatric care presented in the text probably renders the book less useful to U.S. students and residents. For example, the last chapter addresses "things you need to know about" and includes many aspects of British law related to mental health care, involuntary commitment, children, and criminality. Perhaps, more importantly, the value of any pocket book of this genre is increasingly suspect given the easy availability of PDA-based resources, which are more easily searched, more complete, easily customized and updated, and much tidier than the stuffed notebooks those of us from earlier generations carried in our white coat pockets.

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