

**The Essentials of Global Mental Health**

edited by Samuel O. Okpaku, MD, PhD. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 2014, 446 pages, \$135.00 (hardcover).

*The Essentials of Global Mental Health*, edited by Samuel Okpaku, is an admirable book. It takes a broad, multicultural perspective, informed by a rich appreciation for social psychiatry. I am not surprised. Sam has taken this comprehensive point of view for the more than 4 decades that I have known him. He and I were psychiatric residents and graduate students together in a rather unusual training program in psychiatry and social policy sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health. Over many, many hours commuting together, we talked about the profession of psychiatry and the issues facing society. Much has changed in the intervening 40 years, and his book reflects these changes and the maturing of both the profession and its editor.

In this text, Okpaku has gathered together many of the leaders in global mental health practice and theory, who have presented their ideas in 44 chapters organized in 8 sections. The book reflects their erudition. In addition to expected sections on the history and background of global mental health, service development, human resources, and research, there are less-expected, engaging sections on advocacy, gender, and a wide range of special populations. There is also a much-welcomed section on depression, suicide, and violence—perhaps the leading challenges for global mental health.

In addition to authors from the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom, there are many contributors from Latin America and many parts of Asia. There is also a strong representation from Africa, the continent where Okpaku was born but never worked. His perspective as an African leavens the book and makes him particularly sensitive and attuned to the needs of low- and middle-income countries. His perspective as an American makes him appreciate what can be achieved with ample resources but also understand that there is more to global health and mental health than increasing financial resources.

As Okpaku explains in the preface, globalization means more than the shrinking of the world by rapid communication and transportation. It is about a change in the relationships within our interconnected world. Global mental health means more than a trendy change from the term *international mental health*. It means a new approach to delivering mental health services around the world, reflected by shared values of human rights and respect for diversity. *The Essentials of Global Mental Health*, edited by Samuel Okpaku, is an excellent guide to this challenging new world.

**Howard H. Goldman, MD, PhD**  
hh.goldman@verizon.net

**Author affiliation:** University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore.

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