

Book Review

Case Studies in Psychopharmacology: the Use of Drugs in Psychiatry

Second Edition, David Taylor and Carol Paton, (Eds) ISBN 1 84184 154 4. London: Martin Dunitz. Pp Xii + 360. Price £ 24.95.

Case Studies in Psychopharmacology is a book grounded in evidence-based medicine. Cases are presented and the psychopharmacological interventions associated with the care of the patient are provided in a detailed and precise way. Treatment options are discussed at length and recommendations are made following a full analysis of the trial work.

Case Studies covers the whole spectrum of psychiatry. The second edition contains 9 new chapters in addition to the 24 of the first edition. Each chapter follows a format; highlighting the psychopharmacological issues arising from the case, a detailed history is presented, questions are posed and answers given. As with the first edition, the key points are listed and the references are comprehensive, recent and relevant.

Case Studies is also a book that can be easily used by a wide range of health care professionals. In recent weeks I have recommended this text to the following: a "career" psychiatrist revising for his membership examinations, a community psychiatric nurse, a specialist registrar working in elderly medicine and a pre-registration pharmacist. Each professional required something specific; the trainee psychiatrist wanted quality revision material in a diverse range of topics, which *Case Studies* offers. The evidence-based treatment recommendations for diagnoses range from treatment resistant depression to novel agents used in the substance misuser taking in sleep disorders, refractory psychosis and the use of atypical antipsychotics to treat behavioural symptoms of dementia along the way.

The psychiatric nurse approached me after he had recently changed clinical teams, moving from

working with substance misusers to working with the elderly mentally ill. He wanted information on the recent advances in the psychopharmacological treatment of dementias. As a "front-line" worker he wanted practical, relevant information and, after reading the relevant chapters, was very enthusiastic and complimentary about the contents of the book.

My specialist registrar colleague wanted information on the treatment options for treating depression in the elderly. She was also impressed with *Case Studies*, and now plans to undertake an audit of the treatment of depression in the Department of Elderly Medicine.

Finally, I recommended this book to a pre-registration pharmacist interested in psychiatry and psychopharmacology. She commented that the text was no dry, academic exercise in critical appraisal, but rather a way of accessing prescribing guidelines to inform the psychopharmacological management of the whole spectrum of psychiatric disorders.

In this second edition of *Case Studies in Psychopharmacology*, David Taylor and Carol Paton have maintained the quality standard of the first edition and expanded the range of subject matters, bringing together competent and enthusiastic clinical pharmacists who have skilfully examined the available evidence and present workable, practical guidelines. This book will help engender a scientific approach to the "art" of psychiatry.

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