

ABC OF MENTAL HEALTH*

Edited by Teifion Davies and TKJ Craig. Pp xii + 82. Illustrated. £19. BMJ. 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1220-8.

The *ABC of Mental Health* is a handbook of current psychiatric practice. It deals with primary health care and community psychiatry, standard hospital treatment and the management of emergencies. Individual chapters are allocated to the major psychiatric disorders, as well as children, old age, cultural and forensic psychiatry, and the homeless.

The strength of the book lies in the unusually skilled synthesis of available information related to the practice of modern psychiatry. The best chapters are primary health care, community psychiatry, emergencies, psychosexual problems and addiction and dependence. By and large the book achieves its objective, which is to provide, in a readable format, practical guidance on the essentials of managing psychiatric disorders at primary and secondary levels of care.

The weaknesses of the book are the use of examples from the English mental health care system, and of their medication, much of which is not applicable in South Africa, and possibly the use of the ICD-10 psychiatric classification, the A4 size of the book and its cost in South Africa.

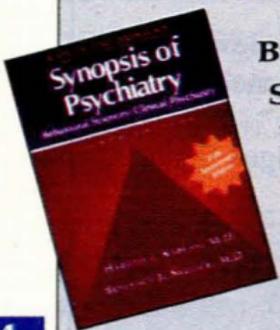
The *ABC of Mental Health* will be of particular value to teachers of under- and postgraduate students in the nursing, health sciences and behavioural sciences professions (other than psychiatry), who will be able to adapt the text to South Africa; and also to trainers of primary health care staff, community workers and all practitioners (other than psychiatrists or psychologists) involved in the delivery of mental health care.

Brian Robertson

SYNOPSIS OF PSYCHIATRY*

By Harold I Kaplan and Benjamin J Sadock. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. Eighth edition, 1280 pp, R570.

Kaplan and Sadock's synopsis of psychiatry – behavioural sciences/clinical psychiatry, extensively revised, expanded and updated.



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