

Anxiety Disorders: A Practitioner's Guide. Paul M. G. Emmelkamp, Theo K. Bouman & Agnes Scholing. John Wiley & Sons Ltd, Chichester, England. 1992. pp. 202. \$

Emmelkamp instructs us at the beginning of this book that it is aimed for an audience of interested professionals within psychiatric services and that it is an overview of recent developments in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of anxiety disorders. To this end the book is mostly successful. However, one should bear in mind that this book was first released in Dutch in 1989 and in English in 1992. It is, therefore, not as up to date as some other books on the market with respect to research findings but it is none-the-less a very fine introduction to the *general* area of the anxiety disorders and assessment and treatment techniques.

Unlike many 'cook book' approaches to the subject matter this tome provides a theoretical background to the nature of anxiety and methods of treatment, reporting major research findings in relation to these areas. Initially the book discusses the phenomenology of anxiety by describing the various disorders in terms of their DSM-III-R criteria, providing a clinical picture of the problem and outlining a case example. General problems related to the diagnosis of each disorder are also discussed along with methods of surmounting these difficulties and sections on differential diagnosis are included to-boot.

A short overview of the aetiology and epidemiology of anxiety disorders is presented and, with the exception of major key note research, this takes a more European slant than usual, which I for one found rather refreshing. Before moving on to the treatment of particular disorders this book also provides an outline of one method of conceptualising cases, namely the Functional Analysis. The description of this technique is very scant and could, in my opinion, have been greatly improved with

the aid of more diagrams. However, one may easily contest that if the reader really does know so little about assessment and diagnosis then they should not be reading this book- which begs the question "who is the preferred audience and what is the book's aim ?"

General treatment techniques and principles for all the anxiety disorders are also considered and whilst being a good basic introduction to procedures such as systematic desensitization, flooding and cognitive therapy it does not take the "do this, do that and watch them get better" approach. It is instead, I feel, a "reminder" to those who have already been trained in the various techniques and offers helpful suggestions for the administration of therapy. However, I must admit that I would have liked the 7 line quote from Freud, on page 68, to have been in English !

A large section of the book is devoted to the treatment of the various anxiety disorders, one chapter each, expounding upon research findings and how to conduct this treatment. With many case examples and delineated treatment packages, general indications for optimal treatment efficacy are well presented. My one complaint though is "why are post traumatic stress disorder and generalized anxiety disorder lumped together in one chapter, only 8 pages long ?". Yes, outcome research is scant and results sometimes conflict but only 4 pages on PTSD, and 2 of them devoted to case examples, does not bode well for 'a practitioner's guide to the anxiety disorders'.

Whilst this book may be useful as a 'memory-jogger' for those who have some training in psychopathology and don't specialise in the field of anxiety, it is definitely not for the specialist nor for the novice. A worthwhile reference for the office shelf and with such authors of world renown, I leave it up to you for the final decision.

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