Book Reviews

Uwe Koch, Christoph Schmeling
Betreuung von Schwer- und Todkranken

Uwe Koch, MD and PhD, is Chairman and Professor of Rehabilitation Psychology, University of Freiburg; Christoph Schmeling, MD, originally cooperated in this project as a student. In their book entitled Care of patients suffering from serious and fatal diseases the authors start from the statement that the majority of doctors and nurses mostly behave helplessly vis-à-vis patients who are suffering from serious and fatal diseases. This situation and its background are carefully analyzed by the authors and, following, they present a thorough concept with regard to an improvement of the psychosocial care of these patient groups.

On this basis of their intention to help concretely the doctors and nurses, Koch and Schmeling developed a training program concerning how to deal with these patients and tested it systematically within group work. Because of the simultaneous accompanying research, a very detailed, elaborated and empirically founded training possibility concerning how to deal with these patients is at our disposal. Particularly, this training program includes possibilities with regard to knowledge supply, self-experience as well as guidance.

This book represents an excellent possibility to become familiar with relevant psychosocial aspects in patients suffering from serious and fatal diseases.

H. Freyberger, Hannover

Ernst Petzold, Achim Reindell Klinische Psychosomatik

Dr. Petzold is chief of the section of Psychosomatics, Department of Medicine, University of Heidelberg; Dr. Reindell is also working there. The book is dedicated to Dr. Paul Christian, the great Heidelberg pioneer in psychosomatic medicine.

This book fills perfectly all the suppositions which must be made with regard to a well-understandable introduction to ‘Clinical psychosomatics’. The authors were successful concerning the writing of their book, for certainly this book will also please the colleagues and students who have not been in touch with psychosomatic medicine up to now.

The first two chapters entitled ‘Introduction to psychosomatic medicine’ and ‘Dispositions with regard to putting forward a theory in psychosomatic medicine’ are followed by carefully and successfully written chapters with regard to psychosomatic disorders in the single organ system. Besides these latter presentations, the final two chapters entitled

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‘General and special psychosomatic questions and problems’ as well as ‘Psychotherapeutic and psychosomatic therapies’ are impressive.

At present, the increasing book boom in the field of psychological medicine can still hardly be critically appreciated. Therefore, it is necessary to refer more directly to inherent books which show as high a quality as this book of Petzold and Reindell.
One purpose of the book is to help orientate some of the young generation of psychiatrists in the direction of practice and research, which will increase the scientific underpinnings of psychiatry. Therefore, the editors have simply selected some important controversial areas where they felt that progress toward a solution could be obtained by a clear formulation and a thorough testing of hypotheses. Research clinicians from the United States and Canada as well as from the United Kingdom and France were invited. The editors selected seven topics and invited two authors to defend opposite viewpoints and to exchange their manuscripts. Each author was offered the possibility of commenting on his ‘opponent’s’ chapter and of revising and altering his own contribution after having seen the opposite view.

On this basis the following topics are treated: ‘Diagnosis in psychiatry’ (Kendall, Townsend); ‘Medical or nonmedical psychotherapy’ (Rakoff, Bahne Bahnson); ‘Is psychoanalysis a psychotherapy?’ (Sutherland, Dongier); ‘Psychoanalysis of schizophrenia’ (Dou-cet, Pankow, May); ‘Behavior therapy and dynamic psychotherapy: enemies or allies?’ (Eysenck, Strupp, Fishman); ‘Electroconvulsive therapy’ (Breggin, Eastwood) and ‘Psycho-surgery’ (Flor-Henry, Breggin).

Indeed, this book will help many psychiatrists familiarize themselves with the depth and seriousness of the crises in certain areas of present-day psychiatry.

H. Freyberger, Hannover

Erratum

I. In the article entitled ‘Sleep Scratching and Dreams in Eczema. A New Approach to Alexithymia’ by Tantam Kalucy and Brown which appeared in Vol. 37 (pp. 26–35) 1982

the fourth line in the last paragraph on p. 34 should now read: ‘... and therefore predisposes to psychosomatic disorder. It seems unlikely that...’.