

Book Reviews

Personality Disorders: New Symptom-Focused Drug Therapy

Edited by S. Joseph. Haworth Medical Press Inc., 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580, USA. ISBN: 0-7890-0134-9.

Personality disorders have traditionally been relegated to the watershed area of psychiatry and considered incurable. A personality disorder is thought of as the background or matrix upon which the psychiatric symptoms develop. Only rarely is a personality disorder considered a presenting complaint per se. Focusing on their etiology, a lot of theories in the past have tended to generate feelings of guilt about upbringing rather than provide a solution to the difficulties caused by the disorder. In the past few decades a more pragmatic approach has been adopted by psychiatrists. Emphasis has shifted to the more fruitful management tool of treating symptoms rather than digging into hidden conflicts through psychoanalysis. During the past decade this approach has been bolstered by the addition of a number of effective and specific medications to the psychiatrist's armory. In particular, the field of psychopharmacology was revolutionized by the advent of selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and the atypical antipsychotic agents.

The book presents a manual for recognition and management of personality disorders and the use of available psychotropic medication. It is divided into two parts. The first part goes through the ten recognizable categories of personality disorders, in addition to the nonspecified disorders and personality changes due to medical conditions. These are well illustrated in fifty different summaries with suggested methods of management. The second part presents the clinical profile of selected psychotropic medications and, as expected, emphasis is on these recently introduced drugs.

The book is quite readable and is laid out in an oversimplified fashion, like a cookbook. The oversimplification may give the uninitiated a false sense of ease about this difficult subject. Moreover, polypharmacy is the rule in all suggested management strategies. An average of three drugs are suggested for concomitant use. Some practicing psychiatrists may not agree with the suggested drugs, or may cite the difficulties engendered by variations among patients in their response to treatment, a fact that may make the suggested treatments non-transferable. With this caveat in mind, the book makes good introduction to a difficult subject. It would be especially useful for

residents in psychiatry, or for practitioners who need a quick reference for management of personality problems.

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Infusion Chemotherapy: Irradiation Interactions

Edited by C.J. Rosenthal and M. Rotman. Available from Elsevier Science BV, P.O. Box 211, 1000 AE Amsterdam, The Netherlands, or Elsevier Science Inc., P.O. Box 945, Madison Square Station, New York NY 10160-0757, USA. Price: US\$245.00. ISBN 0-444-82858-3.

Over the last two decades, the combined use of chemotherapy and radiotherapy has been seriously tested for many types of cancer, especially those of the head and neck. The idea was to maximize tumor cell killing, improve local control, and consequently patient survival.

Over 120 experts contributed to the six sections of this book. The first section on Modulation of Radiotherapy by Chemotherapeutic Agents is well written and covers the topic very well. We have long known the carcinogenic effects of both chemotherapy and radiotherapy, and also the fact that the combination of both will result in a higher incidence of second malignancies. The mechanism of chemo-radiation carcinogenesis is explored in the second section. The section that follows provides an overview of current and future practices in cancer chemo-prevention. The use of antiangiogenesis agents, tamoxifen, omeprazole and clarithromycin for the eradication of *H. pylori*, and hopefully, gastric cancer, is well argued in this section. Whether this approach will reduce the incidence of chemo-radiation-induced cancers remains to be seen. The remaining two sections are on the use of molecular approaches to cancer therapy and computer technology in oncologic research and practices, and do not fit the theme of the book as well as the previous sections. Despite this, the book should make a valuable addition to general hospital and oncology department libraries.

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Cancer Chemotherapy and Biological Response Modifiers, Annual 17

Edited by H.M. Pinedo, D.L. Longo and B.A. Chabner.
Available from: Elsevier Science BV, P.O. Box 211, 1000 AE Amsterdam, The Netherlands, or Elsevier Science Inc., P.O. Box 945, Madison Square Station, New York NY 10160-0757, USA. Price: US\$185.00. ISBN 0-444-82671-8.

The latest annual volume of a contemporary classic series will delight aficionados as much as its predecessors did. Thirty chapters authored by well-known experts in their fields are divided into three sections.

The first section, "Drugs," presents a series of reviews of the major classes of cytotoxic antineoplastics in sufficient detail to satisfy any practicing oncologist, advanced trainee, or neophyte clinical investigator. The format is reasonably consistent from chapter to chapter, and allows the reader to satisfy a hunger for information by "grazing" for tidbits rather than having to sit down for a full meal.

The chapters on taxines and on DNA topoisomerase 1 inhibitors provide much useful information on these newer additions to the oncologist's clinical arsenal (paclitaxel, docetaxel, topotecan and irinotecan). The chapter entitled "New Anticancer Agents," a perennial favorite of mine, is reasonably current, even including the new angiogenesis inhibitors. If there is a shortcoming, it is the meager use of figures and tables in deference to nicely edited text, a consistent feature of the volumes in this series.

A relatively recent addition to this series is the section, "Biological Response Modifiers," with seven chapters on the various biological approaches to cancer therapy now appearing in the clinic. The first chapter, "Monoclonal Antibody Therapy of Cancer," provides a fascinating tale of how a simple idea, targeting tumor cells with specific antibodies, can mushroom into an unimaginably complex series of obstacles to be overcome. The recent licensing of a monoclonal antibody, rituximab, for therapy of B-cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, assumes a new significance against the description of the long struggle to bring this technology to clinical use. Another chapter, "Strategies for Cancer Gene Therapy," leaves the reader with a good overview of a new field and with curiosity about the unanticipated obstacles that will undoubtedly arise in the

clinical development of this novel approach.

The final section, "Tumors," consists of 13 chapters on drug therapy of specific clinical cancers and a concluding section on supportive care. These chapters review the recent literature on chemotherapy and biological therapy of the major tumor types, emphasizing clinical trials in humans rather than animals or in vitro studies. These chapters are somewhat uneven, as might be expected from a multi-author book, but the organization and overall quality of the section meets the high standards of previous volumes in the series. The chapter on breast cancer is an especially comprehensive but readable review.

Overall, what do I think of this book? I confess that I have envied a colleague who purchases this annual offering every year, mainly because of the impressive visual impact on his office bookshelf—a series of royal blue hardbound volumes with silver lettering. But I cannot convince myself to buy every year's offering. For one thing, the lead-time for publishing such a volume makes the "recent literature" reviewed therein about two years behind the publication date. For instance, the chapter on breast cancer begins, "The 1995 literature pertaining to clinical issues in breast cancer had similar themes to prior years." Another chapter begins, "This chapter reviews the results of brain tumor trials published in 1994 and 1995." (Interestingly, in a brief chapter on soft tissue and bone sarcomas, 29 of the 42 references are from 1996. This was probably a late submission). For another thing, contemplating the annual cost of this hardbound volume induces expression of my usually dormant Scottish thrift genes.

If I might venture a modest recommendation to Elsevier BV, why not publish this annual volume in paperback? It would encourage those who appreciate this gem to buy it every year, despite the limited lifespan of its current information. Also, it would be more affordable to trainees who might become addicted and produce a cohort of lifelong buyers. Who knows, it might even become a bestseller in Scotland.

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