SYNTHESIS OF PSYCHIATRIC CASES
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To my father
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INTRODUCTION

This book aims to provide trainees in psychiatry with a logical approach to clinical cases encountered in the postgraduate clinical examination. It illustrates some common and hypothetical cases and provides examples of possible areas examiners may explore which are relevant to these cases. This examination is designed to assess a candidate’s clinical acumen and expertise. It is also a performance as the candidate has a limited time with the patient and also with the examiners in which to convince them that she or he is a competent and empathic clinician. The cases used are those most likely to be encountered in a clinical examination. They comprise disorders frequently encountered and illustrate some of the difficulties of diagnosis or management. Often candidates do themselves a disservice by concentrating on diagnostic possibilities and thereby omitting to emphasize the comorbidity and difficulties that this provides in the management of the case. The clinical examination aims to explore that the candidate is able to show an understanding of the patient seen and are able to formulate an appropriate management plan.

Candidates can prepare in a variety of ways, the most important being clinical work under supervision in their training scheme, and presenting to consultants and supervisors as a regular part of the training programme. Rehearsal in an unfamiliar setting with unknown examiners can also help to manage anxiety in the exam situation.

Managing anxiety is a large part of the exam process. It is also a necessary skill for a consultant who acts as leader of a multidisciplinary team. Candidates often disadvantage themselves by having inadequate control of their anxiety.

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