

Clinical Topics in Addiction

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Edited by Ed Day
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Foreword

In his preface, Ed Day highlights that this book originated in articles written in the peer-reviewed psychiatry literature for a generic audience of consultant psychiatrists. This stimulated me to think whether the book will serve as a useful tool for my generic psychiatry colleagues. Our paths frequently cross as in our daily professional lives we constantly encounter problems relating to problematic drug or alcohol use. I am convinced that this book is a ‘must have’ for every consultant psychiatrist. However, the value of this book is for a much wider audience. I reflected upon how it would feel to be a junior doctor considering a career in addiction psychiatry. Would this book reassure me that it is possible to pursue a fulfilling career in providing professional, evidence-based clinical care to people whose drug use has become a problem to themselves, their families and wider society? Without doubt I am sure that it does have the potential to fulfil such a function. There are few books that offer both a wide scope (breadth) and an exhaustive reservoir of knowledge (depth) by combining the current evidence base with diverse expert clinical knowledge and experience. This book has managed to achieve these aims in a style that is readable, engaging, yet authoritative

There is another readership, however, to whom I would unreservedly recommend this book, namely that of my own professional people-group, primary care clinicians. One of the chapters alludes to the recent growth in primary-care-based drug treatment and another points out that, although psychiatry services for those with mental ill-health and drug dependence are largely separate, in primary care such comorbid conditions are managed by the same clinician. If primary care has traditionally offered the drug treatment field strengths of pragmatism and integrated clinical care for those with comorbid conditions, then there is much that we can receive in return from our colleagues in specialist addiction psychiatry services. This book offers us an authoritative collection of the evidence, and I would like it to sit on the bookshelves of all my primary care colleagues who have clinical responsibility for those who use drugs in a problematic fashion.

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I feel sure that other primary care clinicians sometimes feel beleaguered as I do by the homogenising sense of reducing drug treatment to pharmacological provision for large numbers of opiate users. Well, this book can support us as we seek to develop our professional knowledge, experience and self-esteem. We may not agree with all that is said in it – our professional cultures are perhaps too diverse for such an ideal. Yet I am reminded of the words of Mahatma Gandhi, who wrote ‘I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any’. So let the culture of our secondary care colleagues blow around us and take us on a journey. Initially, it will take us back in time to learn about how drug treatment services have developed in the UK. The journey gathers pace as we are taken into less familiar areas of clinical care and learn about a plant that grows on the banks of the Red Sea and has a stimulant action. Then there are accounts of mushrooms that grow across the world and have hallucinogenic properties. We will also be encouraged to think afresh about the interplay between problematic drug use and mental ill health. Authoritative overviews of psychological interventions are provided, as well as the current evidence base pertaining to pharmacological interventions. Fresh consideration of the common class A drugs encountered in clinical practice leads on to an authoritative critique that reflects on the complex link between intoxication, criminal activity and liability. The journey ends with a delightful chapter that offers a rarity in a clinical textbook, namely a good bedtime read! We are treated to an overview of the influence of substance use in popular literature. Linger for a while at the journey’s end, as one has the sense that the conclusion is essentially humanitarian. It is people, not cases, who struggle with problems encountered by excessive drug or alcohol use and it is our great gain as clinicians to have privileged access into people’s lives! If this book can facilitate access in a way that is more sensitive yet more confident, then the drug treatment field will be the richer.

Nat Wright
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Preface

There have been huge changes in the treatment of addictive behaviours in the past 30 years. The steady development of a scientific evidence base and fluctuating levels of political interest in the topic have led to an evolving and increasingly complex treatment system in the UK and other wealthy countries.

This book has been compiled from articles written for the journal *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, a key resource to support continuing professional development in psychiatry. The journal first appeared in September 1994, and has focused on topics such as physical methods of treatment, psychosocial treatments, sub-specialties of psychiatry (such as addiction psychiatry) and issues concerning the management of clinical services. The aim has always been to publish useful articles for trained consultant psychiatrists who may, however, have completed their training some years before. It has assumed that readers are familiar with conventional basic terminology and have considerable clinical experience, but may have no expert knowledge in the subject of a particular article.

This book is made up of 20 articles that have appeared in *APT* over the past 10 years, and two newly commissioned chapters. Several articles have been extensively updated by the original author to take into account new developments in the field. Each chapter therefore provides continuing medical education with an emphasis on the practical implications of the subject. They are factual, lucid and informative, with clear information and techniques that can be used in everyday practice. The book is written by practising clinicians for practising clinicians. It highlights and references up-to-date evidence, but its main aim is to synthesise this into information that is useful in clinical practice. Thus, this book has much to offer the specialist, but also the general psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse or general practitioner who is interested in the area.

The book covers ‘mainstream’ areas within the substance misuse treatment field, but also broadens its scope to less commonly discussed, but no less important, topics. Chapters 1 and 6, by Jason Luty, provide an analysis of the evidence supporting the range of pharmacological and

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non-pharmacological approaches to drug and alcohol misuse in enough detail to comfortably guide non-specialists managing individuals with such problems. In addition, Duncan Raistrick (chapter 7) gives an extended account of alcohol detoxification, a skill that doctors or nurses practising in all branches of medicine should be acquainted with.

Chapter 2 gives a potted history of the drug treatment system in the UK, highlighting the rapid process of evolution seen in the past 10 years. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 explore the implications of using psychostimulant and hallucinogenic drugs, including khat and magic mushrooms. Nicotine dependence is an extremely common problem, particularly among individuals under the care of psychiatric services, and in chapter 8, Jason Luty explores the evidence for a variety of effective management strategies. By contrast, gambling addiction is a smaller, but growing, problem in the UK, and Sanju George and Vijaya Murali highlight issues surrounding its management in chapter 9.

Chapters 10 and 11 cover the issue of laboratory testing for alcohol and drugs in detail. Clinicians from all specialties may encounter the need for objective testing, particularly in medico-legal work, and it is therefore important to understand the benefits and limitations of the available technologies. The challenging topic of comorbidity of psychiatric illness and substance misuse is covered in detail in chapters 12–15. Ilana Crome and Tracey Myton give a broad overview of the range of pharmacological strategies available for managing these problems (chapter 12), and Mohammed Abou-Saleh (chapter 13) describes the psychosocial context. The most commonly encountered psychiatric problems in users of drugs and alcohol are depression and anxiety, and each is given a chapter. Claire McIntosh and Bruce Ritson (chapter 14) describe the management of depression complicated by substance misuse, and Anne Lingford-Hughes, John Potokar and David Nutt (chapter 15) cover anxiety.

Although great strides have been made in developing pharmacotherapies for addictive behaviours, psychological interventions remain the mainstay of treatment in many cases. Effective interventions are reviewed and described by Adam Huxley and Alex Copello in chapter 16, and motivational interviewing is explored in detail in chapter 17. Motivational interviewing has developed rapidly in terms of theory and evidence for effectiveness in the past 10 years, and has become an essential skill in many areas of psychiatry and behaviour modification.

Addiction in special populations is covered by chapters 18 and 19. Harith Swadi and Sangeeta Ambegaokar give an overview of the unique problems of treating substance misuse problems in adolescents, whereas Sanju George and I focus on pregnancy. There is a strong link between addiction and crime, and two aspects of this relationship are explored in chapters 20 and 21. Medico-legal aspects of intoxication are covered by Quazi Haque and Ian Cumming in chapter 20, and in chapter 21 Peter Snowden reviews violence and substance misuse from the perspective of a forensic psychiatrist.

The final chapter explores what can be learnt from the rich and growing literature about users' subjective perceptions of a variety of psychoactive substances.

Overall, the book aims to be both stimulating and practically useful, and should be a valuable resource in a world where use and misuse of a variety of psychoactive substances is increasing.

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