

DYING OF EMBARRASSMENT: HELP FOR SOCIAL ANXIETY AND PHOBIA. Barbara G. Markway, Cheryl N. Carmin, C. Alec Pollard, and Teresa Flynn. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 1992, 202 pp, \$11.95 (paperback).

There are many self-help books available focusing on the concerns of persons with panic disorder and/or agoraphobia dating back at least to Claire Weekes's pioneering books on agoraphobia (Weekes, 1976). Until recently, however, the clinician who wished to recommend reading for the patient with social phobia was hard-pressed to find a good book to suggest. Books on related topics have been of some help, including *Shyness* (Zimbardo, 1977) and *Intimate Connections* (Burns, 1985), which focuses on dating and romantic relationships. With increasing interest in the last few years in the treatment of social phobia, *Dying of Embarrassment* clearly fills a pressing need.

In the introduction, the authors lay out their goals for the book—to provide information on treatment directly to people with social phobia, to be used as a guide to self-help, to serve as an adjunct to therapy with a mental health professional, and to provide information to mental health professionals. Does the book meet these goals? In my view it does an admirable job. It is written in a down to earth, folksy style that is comfortable for most patients. The presentation is informed by an up-to-date knowledge of the research on the cognitive behavioral treatment of social phobia. The material is divided into brief chapters and the overview encourages the reader to emphasize those sections that are most applicable to his or her problem. The early chapters provide information describing social phobia and our understanding of possible causal factors. Next, the reader is encouraged to assess his or her specific pattern of anxiety and to establish goals and objectives. The chapters outlining the self-help approach focus on anxiety reduction techniques such as paced breathing, cognitive restructuring, and imaginal and in vivo exposure. Supplementary chapters cover issues such as specific social skills, managing life stress, other mental health problems which frequently complicate social phobia, and dealing with setbacks or relapses. There are also chapters on seeking professional help and pharmacological treatment of social phobia. Additional references are provided at the end of some chapters and the book has a brief reference list that is suitable for professionals.

In our clinic we have been using the book, along with some supplementary materials, as the treatment manual in a twelve week cognitive-behavioral group treatment program for social phobia. The book has been evaluated very positively by our

group members. It is easily adapted to a structured group program in which group members cover one to three chapters of the book each week with added homework assignments.

Could the book be improved? As with many self-help books, the material seems to be most accessible to readers with some postsecondary education. The authors would broaden its accessibility by giving more consideration to the reading level of the material and making it less difficult for readers with more limited education. A number of our group members indicated that they would have appreciated more detailed case examples in the early part of the book where the case examples are often very brief. The book does not address the issues of developing friendships (a problem for many individuals with generalized social phobia) or excessive use of caffeine as a factor in the development and maintenance of anxiety problems. Finally, in our groups, we provide material with additional work sheets to allow group members to continue the exercises described in the earlier chapters as they progress through the group program.

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BIOLOGY OF ANXIETY DISORDERS. Rudolph Hoehn Saric, M.D., and Daniel R. McLeod, PhD. American Psychiatric Press, Inc., Washington D.C., 1993, 259 pp, \$36.00.

The editors of this volume faced a fairly daunting task. The goals of the American Psychiatric Press's Progress in Psychiatry Series are to capture in print some of the excitement generated by the bringing together of experts at the American Psychiatric Association's annual meeting symposia and to share the in-depth reviews and innovative ideas that emerge, thus offering the general readership of APA publications a window into the process of scientific progress in psychiatry. This is a terrific idea and a laudable

goal. It is also very appropriate and exciting to focus on the biology of anxiety disorders in this format, since this is an important area of inquiry that is excitedly expanding in many directions at once. Bringing together leading experts from diverse arenas within the anxiety field is critical since the advancement of knowledge requires examining in detail pieces of the pie that are small enough to be seen in a single viewing field, but real breakthroughs in understanding the biology of anxiety will require broader viewpoints that can look at the whole pie and how the various pieces fit together. The editors of this volume clearly recognize this in collecting a set of articles that cover neuroanatomy, neurotransmitters, neuropeptide hormones, the molecular biology of learning, psychophysiology, and cognitive/perceptual psychology. They must be commended for the combined ambition of their title and the Progress in Psychiatry series goals that are spelled out at the beginning of the book. However, the title and goals created a set of hopes and expectations that were impossible to fulfill in the rather slim volume that followed. Although there is much of value in this book, my overall response was one of disappointment. My disappointment may have been sharpened by my reading of this book cover-to-cover in a single sitting. I don't think it was designed to be read in that fashion. In fact, the field itself cannot yet be digested in such a fashion. The diversity of our arenas and the still rudimentary nature of our understanding make a coherent "bigger picture" very difficult to assemble. As the editors aptly note in their concluding remarks, "our knowledge of anxiety is like a partially filled puzzle that permits only the recognition of vague shapes and outlines."

At this point in time we have not yet identified all of the pieces that belong to the puzzle we are trying to assemble. This book is most successful in providing introductory reviews of six areas that *may* provide some of the important pieces. Chapter 1, on "Cerebral blood flow and metabolism in anxiety disorders" provides a brief, readable introduction to the neuroanatomical substrates that may be involved in anxiety disorders and to the methods used to image them and measure their activity. It goes on to review appropriately selected studies on cerebral blood flow and metabolism in arousal and stress paradigms and in specific anxiety disorders. The authors provide candid commentary on the limitations and problems of available studies and provide useful advice for future work. I was left with the sense that although the potential of this work is tremendous, further technical advances are needed before that potential can truly begin to be tapped.

Chapter 2 provides a very nice summary of the role of "serotonin in the pathogenesis of anxiety." Animal work as well as human treatment and challenge studies using serotonergic agents are reviewed. As an anxiety researcher who was relatively uneducated about the serotonergic system, I found this to be the most personally useful chapter in the book. It left me feeling like I have definitely increased my understanding of this complex system and

more eager to follow the literature to see what emerges from this arena. Chapter 3 addresses "the role of corticotropin-releasing factor in the pathophysiology of anxiety disorders." The story of CRF and its role in stress and depression is an important and fascinating one. For those who have not been exposed to it elsewhere, this chapter provides a concise introduction. The animal evidence that CRF may also play a role in anxiety is tantalizing, but the human data remain insubstantial, as evidenced by the fact that the chapter devotes only a single page to CRF in anxiety patients. Much additional work is needed before we can know whether this chapter really belongs in a book on the biology of anxiety disorders.

Readers seeking an introduction to the large, complex body of work on kindling, *c-fos*, and the molecular mechanisms of learning will find Chapter 4 quite useful. It demonstrates the great progress being made in carrying the mechanisms whereby experience alters future responsivity, i.e., learning and memory, to the intracellular level. It remains to be seen whether critical factors in the etiology or even pathophysiology of anxiety disorders lie at that level. Studies of anxiety states in this context may be most useful in advancing our understanding of the normal molecular biology of learning and memory. The authors are successful in their effort to provide a thought-provoking, speculative review designed to stimulate further studies. I am not sure it will reach its intended audience in this book.

Chapter 5 is most useful as a concise review of the psychophysiology of the anxiety disorders. This may be an important area but it remains confusing and the authors make a laudable attempt to make sense of the mass of available data. The conclusion drawn from physiological studies of anxiety patients, that their problem lies in their reactivity and perhaps impaired adaptability, is important to bear in mind in studying all aspects of the anxiety disorders. Chapter 6 reviews data on perceptual and cognitive processes relevant to detection of physiological states, and relates these to symptom reports obtained from anxiety patients. The material here is less mainstream and some may question its inclusion in a book on the biology of anxiety disorders. However, perceptual and cognitive processes are in fact critical biological phenomena that may play important roles in the pathophysiology of some anxiety disorders. Biological studies of human anxiety must increasingly and more directly grapple with such processes. Although this chapter touches on only one small piece of the relevant psychological literature, the editors should be commended for including some discussion of these important psychological processes in this book.

Although I could find much of value in the individual chapters in this book and my overall disappointment may have been partly due to unrealistic hopes as I began to read it, it is still a less than satisfying book. Factors inherent in the nature of an edited volume contribute. Space constraints require selectivity, and with no achievable consensus about where the important breakthroughs will

come from in studying the biology of anxiety disorders, selectivity is always vulnerable to criticism. Some readers will inevitably disagree and be disappointed with what the editors appear to have decided are the most promising and interesting leads to pursue. It is also clearly difficult in an edited volume to make sure all of the authors are on the same wave length. In this case it appears to have been difficult to get everyone to write for the same audience, leaving anyone who reads the whole book uncertain about for whom it was really written. The reader will require a well-oiled gear box to handle the transitions from chapter to chapter if he/she approaches this as a book rather than a collection of articles to be read separately.

I think this book does successfully illuminate the tremendous complexity of the phenomena of interest and the impossible breadth of knowledge required of anyone who wants to truly claim to be an expert in the biology of anxiety disorders. It does not successfully fulfill the promise of its title and the series of which it is a part. Readers are unlikely to feel drawn into an exciting, coherent symposium that summarizes the state-of-the-art of the field. Readers will not be able to justifiably feel like they have obtained an adequate background knowledge of the biology of anxiety disorders. The book provides an accessible and transportable (it's a small book) source of basic reviews of some interesting areas of anxiety research. I recommend it to those readers who are looking for a good place to start in trying to educate themselves about any of the areas covered in the individual chapters. I do not recommend it as a source for a real summary of the scientific pursuit of the biology of anxiety disorders. Pick it up to read a chapter or two, or more. But don't sit down to read the book.

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BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT OF POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER. Earl L. Giller, Jr., M.D., Ph.D. American Psychiatric Press, Inc., Washington D.C., 1990, 245 pp, \$30.00.

During the past decade there has been a marked acceleration in the production and quality of empirical research on post-traumatic stress disorder, particularly research that is biologically oriented. The notion of biological dysregulation underlying aspects of PTSD is not new and is consistent with concepts of shell shock invoked during World War I, and Kardiner's characterization of the post-traumatic syndrome as a physioneurosis during World War II. Nonetheless, the use of modern biological methods in PTSD research lagged considerably compared with their application in the investigation

of the mood disorders, major psychoses, and more recently, other anxiety disorders. There are probably multifactorial reasons for this lag.

PTSD is unique among psychiatric diagnoses in terms of being defined both as a syndrome and as a response to external events. The explicit relationship to external events may engender more obvious social and political implications and therefore controversy, compared to other psychiatric disorders. The diagnostic validity of PTSD has also been challenged in relation to the variable occurrence (or persistence) of the syndrome following exposure to traumatic events and the frequent co-occurrence of chronic PTSD with other disorders. At present, clinical and epidemiological studies have brought about greater consensus that PTSD is relatively common in both military and civilian populations, and that both exposure variables and personal biological and psychosocial risk factors are relevant to its development and persistence. It is also clearer that having PTSD increases the risk for developing additional psychiatric morbidity. Thus, the elucidation of mechanisms underlying PTSD is warranted in addressing an important specific public health problem, as well as toward better understanding a range of psychiatric conditions that can be influenced by trauma.

Biological Assessment and Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder is a useful and important contribution to the evolving understanding of biological mechanisms and their treatment implications. The volume presents or reviews much of the relevant work done prior to the time of its publication in 1990. The content evolved from a symposium presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in May 1988. Thus, the major limitation of the book is its reporting on work that is at least five years old in a rapidly evolving field. That the studies reported on only address chronic PTSD in male combat veterans is more a criticism of the field at the time than the book. Until a similar volume is published, or this one is updated, however, *Biological Assessment and Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorders* is recommend to anyone with a serious interest in the area.

Many of the studies reviewed in this book were conducted by the Editor and his collaborators at the West Haven VA, prior to institution of the VA National Center at the site, and focus on neuroendocrine functioning. Three of these chapters have a review and theoretical orientation and address animal models, the noradrenergic system, and noradrenergic HPA-cortisol interactions. These three chapters are well-written and the information is quite relevant to current research. These and other chapters also present research findings on aspects of noradrenergic and HPA-cortisol function in PTSD. These findings have been expanded on by more recent studies but remain of interest. There is also an informative review of psychophysiological studies that is particularly noteworthy for its incorporation of descriptions of work conducted following WWII in addition to more recent studies. Other chapters include descriptions