

Self-testing in psychiatry

Review Manual for Massachusetts General Hospital Handbook of General Hospital Psychiatry. 5th ed. Theodore A Stern. Pp 121. Philadelphia: Elsevier Mosby. 2004. ISBN 0-323-02768-7.

This book is a useful tool for registrar trainees and practising psychiatrists alike. It comprises several hundred multiple-choice and true-false questions, covering diagnostic and treatment issues across a broad spectrum of topics in psychiatry. Registrars can use the question/answer format of the book as a self-test tool and as preparation for the FCPsych and MMed (Psych) examinations, while psychiatrists in practice will find it handy as a continuing professional development aid.

Questions are broadly focused on aspects of psychobiology relating to psychosomatic medicine (an area of medicine that interfaces with psychiatry and provides the foundation for consultation-

liaison work that psychiatrists do). Increasingly, psychiatrists are being drawn into the field of consultation-liaison work in their day-to-day practice. In fact, many psychiatrists spend as much as 50% (or more) of their professional time seeing to the psychiatric care of patients with complex medical and surgical conditions. Notably, psychosomatic medicine was very recently approved as a psychiatric subspecialty in the USA. The arrival of this manual is therefore timely. It was written by a psychiatrist who heads a psychiatric consultation service and is a Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School (Boston, Massachusetts).

In summary, this manual tests knowledge in the context of how best to understand the needs of patients with psychiatric illnesses within general medical settings. It is recommended as a study aid and provides the ideal opportunity to revise and integrate knowledge of medicine and psychiatry.

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