



Textbook of Autism Spectrum Disorders, edited by Eric Hollander, M.D., Alex Klevzon, M.D., and Joseph T. Coyle, M.D. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Publishing, 2011, 627 pp., \$89.00.

Autism is a presence in both general and scientific societies now more than ever before. Several factors are responsible for this. The tremendous and rapid rise in prevalence is one factor. Researchers are trying to determine whether—beyond changing and heterogeneous diagnostic methods, broadening of the concept, and improvement in screening and diagnostic abilities—there is any real increase. If that be the case, the explanations would probably lie in a convergence of timely, fascinating, and complex environmental factors. The alternative possibility of genetic changes being responsible for such a fast increase is more difficult to believe. Advocacy by families and professionals, scientific research, and interest on the part of funding agencies are synergistically pushing the problems of individuals with autism spectrum disorders to the forefront. This textbook, by Hollander, Klevzon, and Coyle, has therefore arrived at just the right moment. It is timely and opportune in giving an extensive account of our present knowledge of these disorders.

Many controversies are now in the limelight. Given the paucity of evidence-based information for understanding autism spectrum disorders, expert knowledge and experience are of particular value in the field of autism. The textbook has very good contributors who give important accounts of the current state of knowledge, which are scientifically based but also put in context with the perspective of history and social imperatives.

Some excellent contributors take a step forward in integrating knowledge about these disorders. Michael Rutter summarizes the history of the concept and the important turning points in its investigation. His contribution is brilliant and straightforward. He is particularly clear and categorical in his statements regarding the right and wrong steps, including his own, taken by scholars interested in autism over the past 65 years. Judith Miller and Sally Ozonoff share their valuable insight on controversial issues, such as diagnostic challenges, and comment on important social aspects that may affect research and funding targets, such as the “culture of Asperger’s syndrome” and the positive stigma associated with this category of disorders. The chapter on incidence and prevalence, by Eric Fombonne, provides a deep and clear account of the increasing *prevalence* and uncertain increasing *incidence* of autism spectrum disorders. John Constantino starts his chap-

ter on social impairment with a categorical, apparently naïve but highly useful and necessary statement, that should guide every description, classification, investigation, and service for individuals with autism spectrum disorders: “Relative deficiency in *reciprocal social behavior* is the sine qua non of all autism spectrum disorders (ASDs)” (p. 139). The selection of topics in the Target Symptoms part of the textbook is very useful for the clinician (i.e., chapters on Social Impairment, Development of Language and Communication, Disruptive Behaviors, Restricted Repetitive Behaviors, Self-Injury, Aggression and Related Problems, Associated Symptoms, Sleep Disorders, and Comorbid Disorders). Also very useful is the chapter on Complementary and Alternative Treatments by Michelle Zimmer, who gives a very comprehensive and commonsensical approach, accompanied by available evidence-based data, on how to manage the immense and extended use of complementary and alternative therapies by patients with autism spectrum disorders and their families. This chapter was a difficult undertaking and one very constructively resolved.

The style of the book has great dissimilarities from one chapter to another. Together with some chapters with lots of expert opinion content, others are much more of a scientific review, with different levels of depth and no clear strategy or rationale of which issues (chapters) to include. For example, a chapter with a thorough clinical account of classical (or Kanner) autism, within the section entitled The Disorders, is missing. Also absent is a discussion on savant skills, a very typical and specific feature of some individuals with autism and one that may shed light on the nature of the autistic brain. The transition from diagnoses in childhood to diagnosis in adulthood is barely mentioned and a matter of great current interest. Within the etiology part of the text, an irregular account of the current state of knowledge is presented, with too much information on animal data and the amygdala, for instance, and far too little on findings of other anatomical regions and aberrant connectivity, giving the impression of a shallow editing process. The same can be said for some overlapping of content between chapters, such as the chapter on Clinical Evaluation of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and the one on Evaluation and Testing, or the decision to extensively explain some of the proposed explanatory psychological models of autism and disregard others.

A discussion on the concept of autism spectrum disorders compared with that of pervasive developmental disorders—how and why the former has gained predominance and how the concept is rapidly evolving from a very restricted, classical view of very severely affected individuals to a much broader

concept—is missing. The position of language disturbances in the nosology of autism or their clinical description would also have been very interesting.

The decision to include a chapter on a case report introducing an experimental treatment (*Trichuris suis* Ova), one of the thousands being proposed for autism, is hard to understand, and a textbook on autism spectrum disorders does not seem to be the right place to discuss this. The case report would have been better suited as part of the chapter on Complementary and Alternative Treatments.

Clinically, the book has some excellent contributors with very strong chapters that make a major contribution and with conclusions that are likely to survive the effect of time. The editors have gathered very authoritative voices summarizing current knowledge on autism, which will undoubtedly make this textbook particularly useful for clinicians.

MARA PARELLADA, Ph.D.
Madrid, Spain

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ADHD Comorbidities: Handbook for ADHD Complications in Children and Adults, edited by Thomas E. Brown, Ph.D. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Publishing, 2009, 478 pp., \$99.00.

In recognition of the fact that attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a complex disorder, with the co-occurrence of other psychiatric disorders being among the most challenging complications, this textbook provides a comprehensive review of how ADHD relates to other disorders and how this interaction can be effectively recognized and treated. In addition, the book provides updated information about developmental aspects of ADHD not current in its preceding volume (*Attention-Deficit Disorders and Comorbidities in Children, Adolescents, and Adults*, published in 2000). To my knowledge, there are few definitive textbooks that cover this clinical disorder over the life span and provide a developmental context for its various presentations over time. Moreover, phenomenological descriptions are not limited to DSM criteria but rather integrated with the rich knowledge gained about this disorder from the field of neuroscience. After establishing the developmental complexities, genetics, and common presentations of ADHD from preschool to adulthood, the body of the book focuses on the co-occurrence of the disorder with a variety of psychiatric syndromes, including mood and anxiety disorders, oppositionality and aggression, obsessive-compulsive disorders, language and learning disorders, substance use disorders, autism spectrum disorders, developmental coordination disorder, sleep disturbances, and Tourette's syndrome. This thematic organization is helpful not only to a clinician but also to educators and laypersons, who might observe attentional problems manifested in a variety of different contexts outside of a clinical setting.

Compared with the earlier edition of this book, interim knowledge has suggested conceptual models of ADHD that

embrace its heterogeneity among individuals and its susceptibility to change across development and environmental variations. In addition, ADHD is no longer considered simply a disorder of executive function as defined by neuropsychological tests but rather a complex syndrome of impairments across multiple overlapping cognitive operations, including motivation and emotion regulation. This book also makes the point that whereas early studies cautioned against the use of psychostimulant therapy for individuals with ADHD and comorbid conditions such as mood or anxiety disorders, recent literature suggests that many patients may in fact benefit from such treatment. This new framework is illustrative of the contemporary view that individual patients rarely have symptoms that fit neatly into unified diagnostic groups. Moreover, treatment should be tailored to target overlapping symptoms and dimensional features and should incorporate pertinent sources of stress and support. Although controversies abound regarding the diagnosis and treatment of highly comorbid conditions such as ADHD, DSM-5 work groups are being challenged to consider alternative views of psychiatric diagnoses that incorporate these types of complexities. In this way, this textbook will prove to be an excellent compendium to the DSM, focused specifically on attentional dysfunction and related disorders.

As a child psychiatrist and pediatrician, I found myself drawn to the case vignettes, information about clinical course with complicated ADHD, and treatment recommendations. Each chapter ends with key clinical bullets, recommended readings, and Internet resources, all useful tools for a busy clinician. The chapters at the end of the book provide another level of guidance on the assessment and intervention of ADHD, synthesizing special considerations described in the preceding chapters. It would be nice to see more speculation on gaps in current knowledge and what kind of study designs will help advance research in this field. For example, although much has been learned in the past decade about the benefits of certain medications and behavioral approaches for the treatment of ADHD from the Preschool ADHD Treatment Study, the Multimodal Treatment Study of Children with ADHD, and the National Comorbidity Survey Replication, few studies have helped us optimize treatments and outcomes for individuals with predominantly ADHD inattentive type, familial ADHD, or ADHD as a result of a perinatal developmental insult (e.g., fetal alcohol syndrome). If advancements in the past decade are any indication of the trajectory of knowledge gained in this field, I look forward to the next generation of studies that will provide even greater levels of sophistication in the evaluation and treatment of ADHD.

MANPREET KAUR SINGH, M.D., M.S.,
Stanford, Calif.

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