

## Book reviews

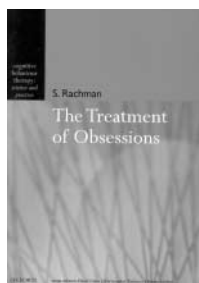
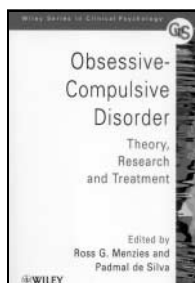
EDITED BY SIDNEY CROWN, FEMI OYEBODE and ROSALIND RAMSAY

### Obsessive–Compulsive Disorder. Theory, Research and Treatment

Edited by Ross G. Menzies & Padmal de Silva. Chichester: Wiley. 2003. 456 pp. £24.95 (pb). ISBN 0 471 49445 3

### The Treatment of Obsessions

By S. Rachman. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2003. 168 pp. £22.95 (pb). ISBN 0 19 851537 5



Why do some people get obsessive–compulsive disorder (OCD) and not others? Why are people unable to part with worn out or useless possessions? Is body dysmorphic disorder the archetypal obsessive–compulsive spectrum disorder? How do you manage patients who only partially respond to selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors?

These are just some of the questions answered by over 20 authorities from both sides of the Atlantic in *Obsessive–Compulsive Disorder. Theory, Research and Treatment*, a succinct yet broad view of OCD. The scope of the book is wide, including chapters on the phenomenology of OCD, primary obsessional slowness and OCD in children and adolescents.

The chapter introducing a cognitive–behavioural model to explain compulsive hoarding is particularly impressive. The authors use the story of Dante's *Inferno* to illustrate this condition. Dante's hoarders are sent to the fourth level of hell, condemned to bash each other with their hoarded stones for eternity. The authors liken this to a recent event in Massachusetts, in which a number of people died because hoarded possessions caught fire and blocked escape routes.

Danger ideation reduction therapy (DIRT) is described as 'a viable alternative to standard interventions for compulsive washers'. It aims to eliminate patients' illness beliefs by reevaluating their perceptions of risk rather than engaging them in exposure and behavioural experiments. A randomised controlled trial of DIRT and exposure response prevention is currently underway.

Almost a third of the book is devoted to atypical presentations and subtypes of OCD. Treatment of obsessions, ruminations and covert compulsions is introduced, but I was left wanting to know more about practical interventions for successfully treating patients whose primary problem is obsessions.

Rachman's readable *The Treatment of Obsessions* proposes an 18-piece 'toolkit' for treating patients' obsessions, and also gives readers a theoretical basis for thinking about cognitive and behavioural treatment planning. He advocates encouraging patients to analyse their intrusive thoughts, their meaning and interpretation. Reducing misinterpretations, he argues, reduces obsessions. His six case vignettes give a vivid sense of the difficulties that therapists and patients face when tackling disabling obsessions. Although in the first vignette the patient responds well in just eight sessions, he describes other patients who only partially respond and he is pessimistic about the outcome for patients with a previous psychosis.

Psychiatrists should make space on their shelves for both these cogent texts. Although written independently they are remarkably compatible, *Obsessive–Compulsive Disorder* providing a sound introduction to OCD and *The Treatment of Obsessions* being an excellent practical guide.

**Sabina Dosani** Specialist Registrar in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, OCD Clinic for Children and Young People, Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SW5 8AF, UK

### Psychoanalytic Theories. Perspectives from Developmental Psychopathology

By Peter Fonagy & Mary Target. London: Whurr. 2002. 402 pp. £25.00 (pb). ISBN 1 86156 239 X



In 1998, Eric Kandel called for a rapprochement between psychoanalysis and the biological sciences, suggesting that this would provide a new intellectual basis for psychiatry and enrich both disciplines. His call has been resoundingly answered in this work by Fonagy & Target. They have summarised the theories of the most important British and American psychoanalytic thinkers over the past 100 years, providing the empirical evidence for the underlying model of development of each theory, drawing on the neurosciences and infant and child development research in particular to do so.

The coverage of psychoanalytic theories is brief, yet comprehensive, and theorists who have been too little acknowledged for their contribution, Joseph Sandler for example, are given due credit. The strengths and weaknesses of each theory are delineated in succinct fashion and without apparent bias – no mean feat in a field where views may be held with quasi-religious fervour, and workers within the field invariably have their own favourites.

Most importantly, theories that have suffered because some aspect of the theory has been regarded as disproven by research