

from Aquinas) is particularly admirable.

Devettere's book approaches every topic through a helpful consideration of the history of the issues and an account of the major alternatives. In chapter 6 he discusses issues pertaining to the beginning and the end of life—such as reproductive technologies, abortion, and the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment—examining the traditional accounts of what a human being is and offering his own concept of a “psychic body” as a contribution to the debate. The latter chapters deal with specific classes of medical ethical problems, such as physician-assisted suicide, withdrawal of medical nutrition and hydration, and organ transplant, and he shows convincingly the effectiveness of his Aristotelian approach.

Besides his historical and conceptual treatments of each issue, the author presents a number of actual

cases from the history of medical ethics. His case discussions bring out the ethically relevant facts of each case and present the viewpoints of patients, providers, and proxies. His discussions are consistently clear, measured, balanced, and careful.

This book would be a fine text for medical ethics courses as well as a superb reference work for those who need background on the specific ethical issues discussed. The author's account of the concept of informed consent as well as his treatment of the ethics of surrogate or proxy decision making (especially his discussion of “Deciding for the Mentally Ill”) would be valuable for mental health professionals involved in making determinations of patients' decision-making competence and for those making proxy decisions for incompetent patients, including the decision to resort to involuntary confinement.

Noteworthy emphasis is placed on pharmacologic treatment of the psychiatric conditions and on the complexity of pharmacologic interactions with both medical and psychiatric illnesses. Accompanying each chapter is a variety of case presentations and questions, which reemphasize the clinical context and which may be of use to those studying for board examinations.

Obviously, no useful text can be exhaustive. Topics important to the consultation-liaison psychiatrist, such as somatoform and factitious disorders, sleep disorders, and neurologic conditions, are minimally addressed here. However, the subjects that are included are presented in a manner that holds the reader's attention and provides practical approaches.

The text may be especially useful as a practical reference. The table of contents and index are well laid out so that the reader is easily directed to specific topics of interest. Each subject is thoroughly researched and referenced, allowing readers to pursue any topic in greater detail if desired. Last, an amply supply of tables and appendixes, such as guidelines for managing delirium, hepatic metabolic pathways for psychotropic drugs, and neuropsychiatric effects of electrolyte imbalances, makes the book invaluable for rapid reference. Indeed, I have copied many of the tables to carry with me when I go to the wards.

The book's usefulness spans the entire range of medical-psychiatric practitioners, including consulting psychiatrists and other allied staff, psychiatric and medical residents, and medical practitioners who deal regularly with psychiatric sequelae of medical conditions. As a practicing consultation-liaison psychiatrist, I am always on the lookout for textbooks that offer practical yet useful approaches to the many problems seen at the interface of medicine and psychiatry. As an educator, I look for texts that stimulate students and residents to think and discuss. *A Case Approach to Medical-Psychiatric Practice* by Drs. Wyszynski and Wyszynski serves both purposes.

A Case Approach to Medical-Psychiatric Practice

by Antoinette Ambrosino Wyszynski, M.D., and Bernard Wyszynski, M.D.; Washington, D.C., American Psychiatric Press, 1996, 459 pages, \$56

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In the introduction to *A Case Approach to Medical-Psychiatric Practice*, the authors suggest that their objective is to “reclaim psychiatry's medical roots.” They propose to do so by focusing on the biologic bases for medical conditions and the relationship to psychiatric illness. While acknowledging the role of psychosocial issues, they concentrate on the biologic substrates. What results is a triumphant manuscript that not only reconnects psychiatrists with their medical roots

but reminds them that they are still medical practitioners. Furthermore, these objectives are accomplished in a wonderfully educational manner.

Each chapter looks at patients with illnesses of a particular medical system, including cardiovascular, pulmonary, renal, hepatic, and gastrointestinal disease; obstetric and gynecologic conditions; oncology; and HIV. A thorough discussion of each subject, including both medical and psychiatric knowledge, guides the reader through each organ system. The focus is primarily on psychiatric disorders associated with each medical condition, from the perspectives both of how medical illnesses may precipitate psychiatric disease and of how primary psychiatric disorders may be affected or complicated by medical illness.

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