

## BOOK REVIEW

### **THE SYDNEY HANDBOOK OF ANXIETY DISORDERS: A GUIDE TO THE SYMPTOMS, CAUSES AND TREATMENTS OF ANXIETY DISORDERS**

**Edited by Professor Philip Boyce, Associate Professor Anthony Harris, Dr Juliette Drobny, Dr Lisa Lampe, Associate Professor Vlada Starcevic and Professor Richard Bryant. University of Sydney, Sydney; 2015. 411 pages, index.**

Paperback: ISBN 9780994214508, RRP\$48.00.

Kindle ebook: ISBN 9780994214515, RRP\$7.18.

**A**nxiety disorders can be seen as a challenging, complex and difficult area of clinical medicine and, regrettably, at times they appear to be ignored or avoided. This is not appropriate in current general practice. According to data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, more than 14% of people in Australia exhibit symptoms of debilitating anxiety, with many being undiagnosed and untreated. Anxiety disorders are not trivial and can cause considerable impairment.

This new book from the University of Sydney Medical School, prepared by clinicians and researchers of international repute, provides a valuable and practical guide to anxiety disorders for busy doctors in general practice and community care. Using a biopsychosocial model, the editors and other contributors have put together a comprehensive review that covers the nature of anxiety itself and the physiology of the normal stress response, as well as the genetics and gene–environment interactions, developmental antecedents and neurobiology. The impairment that results from anxiety is described, as well as the ways in which behaviours that endeavour to control anxiety can also cause impairment. There is information about the current classification of anxiety disorders, and discussion of some of the conceptual issues in diagnosis, including categorical and dimensional concepts. The presentation of similarities and differences with anxiety disorders between the dominant classification schemes *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* and the *International Classification of Diseases (ICD)* is useful.

The book includes a section on the assessment of anxiety disorders, which is followed by sections on treatments, including behaviour therapy, cognitive therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy and pharmacotherapy. The use of medications is covered in a practical and sympathetic fashion, summarising key evidence for the place of different agents and their use in combination with psychological techniques. Key advantages and disadvantages are discussed in relation to the use of benzodiazepines, which is, at times, contentious pharmacotherapy for anxiety disorders. The book concludes with a valuable summary for ‘putting it all together’. A detailed reference list is provided.

*The Sydney Handbook of Anxiety Disorders* is a commendable publication. It does not pretend to have the encyclopaedic qualities of major texts on cognitive behavioural therapeutics, but in an integrated fashion contains the essence that is of value to a busy practitioner. The book is worthy of consideration by anyone treating patients with these disorders – particularly GPs, who deal with patients with anxiety disorders every day. It would also be of value for undergraduate medical and nursing students and others with an interest in clinical health practice.



**Professor John W.G. Tiller**  
Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry  
Albert Road Clinic  
The University of Melbourne  
Melbourne, Vic

