

## Animal Maltreatment: Forensic Mental Health Issues and Evaluations

Edited by Lacey Levitt, Gary Patronek, and Thomas Grisso. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016. 400 pp. \$79.95.

Animal maltreatment, typically under the rubric of “animal cruelty,” sometimes enters the psychiatric literature as a manifestation of psychopathology or in relationship to aggression against humans. In this book, animal maltreatment is cast more broadly to include physical abuse, sexual abuse, hoarding, and neglect of animals. Rather than animal abuse or cruelty, deliberate physical abuse is denoted as “intentional animal maltreatment.”

The psychiatric literature has examined the conduct of animal abuse and cruelty clinically and diagnostically, as well as its possible association with violent and criminal conduct. *Animal Maltreatment* covers the subject from a broader perspective and places it within social, historical, and legal contexts, giving meaning and practical approaches to such conduct. In this respect, *Animal Maltreatment* is a unique and informative contribution to the literature. It can serve as a useful reference and guide to researchers in the field, forensic practitioners in mental health, and policy makers.

The editors bring a broad and encompassing perspective to the task, which results in a book with wide application. All have contributed research to the literature. Levitt, who has worked as a correctional psychologist, has conducted research on the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Behavioral Unit’s Criminal Histories of Animal Cruelty Offender project. Patronek is a veterinarian and epidemiologist who has directed the Center for Animals and Public Policy and founded the Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium. Grisso is a pioneer in forensic psychology whose research emphasis is on conceptualization and assessment. These authors introduce the reader to the concepts, principles, skills, and research involved in forensic assessments of individuals involved in animal maltreatment. The pioneering book opens the door to the nascent field of forensic animal maltreatment.

The book is organized into four sections: Social and Legal Context for Animal Maltreatment presents the historical development of social recognition of animal maltreatment and legislative responses as well as a framework for expanding the relevant knowledge base. Theory and Research on Animal Abuse summarizes the current knowledge base and research on animal cruelty and sexual abuse and examines the link between animal maltreatment and personal aggression and animal neglect and hoarding. Social Responses to Neglect and Hoarding, Cruelty and Sexual Abuse examines how animal maltreatment affects the welfare of animals. Forensic evaluations address conceptualization, methodology, practice, and ethics of forensic examinations of defendants in animal maltreatment cases.

The social importance of animal maltreatment goes beyond the well-placed concern over the welfare and suffering of animals. Levitt’s discussion of the psychology and context of various forms of cruelty and sexual abuse is informative. Emily Patterson-Kane, who examines the link between animal maltreatment and personal aggression, observes, “The mere fact that a greater proportion of persons with crimes against people have animal abuse histories does not answer the question [of whether aggression against animals is generalized to people] because it is possible that most people who maltreat animals do not harm humans” (p 141). In reading her update, I am compelled to recall our literature review of childhood cruelty to animals and later aggression against people in which we compared studies that confirmed this association with those that did not.<sup>1</sup> Variations in definitions of animal cruelty, if defined, in personal violence, and in methodologies, helped to explain discrepant results. For future research we recommended direct interview instead of only chart review for data collection, a comprehensive history of animal involvements in childhood, rather than just a few screening questions and defining personal aggression that is “recurrent, dangerous aggression against people” (p 716).

From Patterson-Kane’s updated review of literature on the so-called link, it appears that considerable research has been accomplished over the past three decades, but such variations in definitions and methodologies continue to result in an association that is less robust and well characterized than it might oth-

erwise be. Nonetheless, Patterson-Kane, was able to conclude that “Animal abuse distinguished by features that increase its severity should be considered to place a person in a high-risk category that may include the co-occurred and/or future propensity toward other types of violence or criminal offending, and the possibility of past and current victimization” (p 152).

Up to now scientific literature on animal maltreatment has been compartmentalized with deliberately abusive behaviors reported and discussed separately from animal neglect. *Animal Maltreatment*, with its more encompassing title, addresses both behaviors together in parallel fashion. As for physically and sexually abusive victimization of animals, Patronek and Nathanson provide understanding and a classification of various psychopathologies, psychodynamics, and motives for animal hoarding and neglect.

In bringing together the history, current knowledge, public policy responses, conceptualizations for further research and recommendations for best practices, *Animal Maltreatment* provides a foundation and compass for developing the specialized field of forensic examination of defendants in animal maltreatment cases and for dealing with this serious but poorly understood criminal and often psychopathological behavior.

#### Reference

1. Felthous AR, Kellert SR: Childhood cruelty to animals and later aggression against people: a review. *Am J Psychiatry* 144:710–17, 1987

Alan R. Felthous, MD  
St. Louis School of Medicine  
St. Louis, MO

Disclosures of financial or other potential conflicts of interest: None.

## Psychiatric Services in Correctional Facilities (Third Edition)

By the American Psychiatric Association, Arlington, VA:  
American Psychiatric Press, Inc., 2016.  
153 pp. \$36.95 in paperback.

This is a recent report of the American Psychiatric Association’s Work Group to Revise the APA Guide-

lines on Psychiatric Services in Correctional Facilities. The third edition of *Psychiatric Services in Correctional Facilities* attempts to bridge the 15-year-gap between the second edition in 2001 and the present. Much has changed during this timeframe, including an increase in the population of incarcerated men from 1.2 to 2.2 million between 1989 and 2012 (preface). A survey of county jails indicates that 95 percent of confined individuals with serious mental illness and 75 percent reported a substantial increase in inmates with serious mental illness relative to 5 to 10 years ago.<sup>1</sup> The members of the Work Group who created these new Guidelines are notable in the field of forensic and correctional psychiatry. The book succeeds in providing essential information on psychiatric services in jails and prisons in a concise and organized manner, while placing them in a legal and constitutional framework.

The book is divided into three parts that are supplemented by 10 appendices. Part I examines basic legal concepts, including the right to treatment, adequate care, and treatment over objection. The authors appraise how inmates access treatment and the quality of the care delivered. The book unfortunately does not elaborate on treatment over objection in the context of The U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Washington v. Harper*, 494 U.S. 210 (1990). Many jails and prisons do not offer this treatment option and would rather place an individual on a waiting list for state psychiatric hospitalization which may take a long time due to lack of available beds. As a result, inmates deteriorate and some, who have been adjudicated incompetent to proceed with trial, end up spending more time incarcerated than they should. Where does autonomy end and negligent service provision begin?

Under the section on confidentiality and privacy, some psychiatrists may find it controversial that the recommendations include limiting the involvement of the psychiatrist in the determination of whether an offender’s mental disorder contributed to a behavioral infraction and that the psychiatrist should not comment on whether an inmate should be disciplined. The recommendation that because of the potential for conflicting roles, evaluating psychiatrists should not be the treating psychiatrist is unrealistic given the shortage of psychiatrists working in correctional settings. This section of the book also examines the mental health referral process, determining the level of