

BOOK REVIEWS

PSYCHIATRIC ETHICS. Edited by Sidney Block and Paul Chodoff. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981. ISBN 0-19-261182-8. \$29.50.

Reviewed by Susan A. Salladay, PhD

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Evidently psychiatrists, along with their medical colleagues, have throughout the history of their profession assumed implicitly that they could perform their task without ethical difficulties by serving the best interests of their patients. In the process they have tended to ignore the ethical foundations of their work.

This provocative paradox leaps out from the first paragraphs of the editors' introduction to *Psychiatric Ethics*. How is it that one can serve patients' best interest and, at the same time, ignore the ethical foundations of psychiatry? Instead of leaping to conclusions ricocheting around the slightly indicting word "assumed," look deeper into the problem itself and the complexity of ethical issues currently bombarding the field of psychiatry that totally eclipse any single practitioner's influence or value system. Thus, the editors justify their intent in addressing this complexity, in drawing together the eighteen essays that comprise *Psychiatric Ethics*: "unfortunately a psychiatrist cannot rely on 'dedication to patients' to lessen the immensity of ethical problems." Block and Chodoff, both psychiatrists, have put together an excellent sampling of current writing aimed at exploring the complexities of ethical concerns facing the profession generally and the individual psychiatrist specifically.

The editors list five reasons why "psychiatric ethics has within a relatively short period of time become a most respectable subject . . . (and) its literature has mushroomed . . .": (1) the rise of the "medical consumerism" movement; (2) the "civil liberties approach" to mental illness; (3) the public image of the manipulator-psychiatrist and hapless victim-patient; (4) "fall-out" from the 1977 World Psychiatric Association Congress, and (5) the influence of law, sociology, psychology, theology and philosophy on the ethical aspects of psychiatric practice. Each reason has specific, complex meanings for forensic psychiatry.

The eighteen essays in *Psychiatric Ethics* are wide ranging and well written. Of particular interest to forensic psychiatrists are two articles: "Psychiatric Confidentiality and the American Legal System: An Ethical Conflict" by Jerome Beigler, MD, and "Ethics and Forensic Psychiatry" by John Wing, MD, PhD. Other articles deal with such concerns as ethical theory, ethics in psychiatric education, children's rights, psychiatric research, sexuality and sex therapy, involuntary hospitalization, and the political dimensions of psychiatry. In many of these articles authors are concerned to show the practical relevance of ethics to everyday professional dilemmas such as those involving physician-patient relationships and the plethora of ethical confusions (concerning values, expectations, as-

sumptions about authority, and differing decision styles) that may foreshadow the deterioration of the therapeutic relationship.

Most of the authors of the various chapters in *Psychiatric Ethics* are psychiatrists with university clinical appointments. In addition there is a strong international, intercultural flavor to the writing that is of advantage in any work on ethics in challenging the prevailing stereotypes of the dominant social group.

Psychiatric Ethics presents itself as an adventure and a scholarly achievement, appropriate reading for any mental health profession who isn't yet ready to settle back into the fluff and fatuity of the *status quo*. □

THE TREATMENT OF ANTISOCIAL SYNDROMES, Edited by William H. Reid. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1981. 269 pp.

Reviewed by James E. Olsson, PhD

Reading and reviewing this edited volume is closely akin to visiting Baltimore's Lexington Market for the first time and trying to gorge on all its fruit stands, candy shops, bakeries, and seafood counters at once. One is initially overwhelmed by the variety and richness of offerings, but then feels somewhat let down that some of the fare wasn't up to expectation. This reviewer always has had a problem with edited books in any case, and, I suppose, one should expect some chapters of lesser quality. The editor himself cautions in the introduction that the text is not complete and refers the reader "to more closely examine the literature with regard to the pharmacologic treatment of several classes of antisocial persons." This reviewer would agree the two chapters concerning drug treatment included in the text were too brief.

For the most part, the contributions were comprehensive and informative. The chapter on the asocial child by Helen Morrison was broad-ranging and also weighty with references (271 in all!). Morrison also points up one of the most bedeviling problems in regard to antisocial individuals; that is, the lack of precise definitions in diagnosis which results in an inability to compare treatment programs. Morrison states, "until the problem is defined, the attempts to state who shall treat and how treatment shall be done remain nebulous." Regardless of this problem, she goes on to describe many of the most relevant research studies of asocial children with clarity and conciseness.

More than half the book is devoted to chapters dealing with specific patient groups. The chapter on sex offenders by David Kentsmith briefly but adequately covers the history, classification, etiology, and treatment considerations related to these offenders. Richard Rada's chapter on sociopathy and alcoholism points up the frustrations and problems inherent in dealing with sociopathic and/or alcoholic clients. Heeding his advice regarding careful differential diagnosis of alcoholism vs. sociopathy could