Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
G. D. Kewley

The biological basis of traits of overactivity, inattentiveness and impulsivity, the core features of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Hyperkinetic Disorder is now all but proven by molecular biologists. However the clinical, scientific and ethical debate about whom should be diagnosed with a disorder is still unresolved. The scales oscillate between the need to reduce obvious suffering in children and adolescents and the ethical question about whether medication is the right pathway for all apparent sufferers.

Dr Kewley is a paediatrician whose practice and philosophy is determined by the American concepts of disorders of overactivity and inattention, hence the title. This book starts with some easily recognisable case examples, then covers core features, comorbidity, age trends and management. There is also a useful review of the current research within the field of ADHD.

Overall, this book provides a refreshingly easy read about this complex subject, but does not address the question of initial assessment and diagnosis thoroughly enough. Although the subject of comorbidity is well dealt with, ascertaining those children who may be presenting with primary disorders masking as ADHD is not covered well within this text. In particular, the impact of parenting and adverse educational environments is not examined.

Medical management is also somewhat superficially dealt with and if medication is not successful, then the application of additional medication rather than reevaluation of the symptoms is promoted as the first alternative. Important questions still remain about the proven efficacy and validity of using multiple medication in this way in children.

Overall, these criticisms aside, it is a well-written text, put in clear and simple language that should be useful to both professionals and parents. This book will be a useful clinical reference text for clinicians wanting clear and concise advice in this area.  

Mary Cameron
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In the Long Run... Longitudinal Studies of Psychopathology in Children
Committee on Child Psychiatry, GAP

This simply written book aims to assist clinical decision-making by presenting an integrated review of longitudinal studies not otherwise readily accessible. With some exceptions, the chapters are syndrome based, often starting with case vignettes, and with considerable emphasis on treatment outcome studies.

The book may be helpful to child mental health workers just beginning to grapple with the research literature and with the application of research findings in practice. Sadly though, the references are dated and justice is not done to the more outstanding longitudinal studies that have now come of age. Conduct disorders, one of the most challenging childhood conditions, are not given due weight. One gets the impression of inordinate publication delays, perhaps because, as in other GAP reports, each chapter was written by one or two (anonymous) authors before revision by the Committee as a whole.

Sula Wolff
Edinburgh

Marriage, Divorce and Children’s Adjustment (2nd Ed.)
Developmental Clinical Psychology and Psychiatry Series, Vol. 14

This volume is a revised and updated second edition of the useful review that was first published 10 years ago. That decade has been a busy one and there is much new research to include, though the general conclusions remain largely unchanged. After introductory chapters, there is a valuable discussion of some of the methodological weaknesses that still beset some of the research on children and divorce. There are then summaries of the various adverse outcomes that have been associated with divorce (conduct and other psychological problems, delinquency, earlier child bearing, lower educational attainment and increased likelihood of themselves divorcing) and the family and other processes that may mediate these effects. This section concludes with a helpful list of goals for practitioners and policy makers that fit well with those of the English Family Law Act 1996. Prominent among these goals is a reduction of conflict between parents, both in marriage and after divorce, support for parent-child relationships post separation, and adequate post divorce financial support for children.

The final parts of the book deal with therapeutic and legal intervention. The former discussion takes a family systems approach and it underlines the ‘distressingly small body of research on therapeutic interventions’, despite all the attention paid to divorce.

This book has a strong American bias where divorce rates are, of course, much higher than in the UK and the legal process differs significantly and varies on a state by state basis. Nevertheless, the broad conclusions are very similar to those of the UK review by Rodgers and Pryor (1998) which could be usefully read alongside it.

Martin Richards
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Parenting, Schooling and Children’s Behaviour. Interdisciplinary Approaches
A. Buchanan & B. L. Hudson (Eds.) Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 1998. pp. 201. £35.00 (hb).

This book is a useful introductory sample of research carried out by people in Oxford. It includes short chapters on Positive Parenting by Frances Gardner, Preschool Interventions by Kathy Syrva, The Review of Parent Training Programmes by Jane Barlow, and The Introduction of Evi-
dence-Based Social Work by Eva Lloyd. Theresa Smith describes a useful survey of what parents actually want, and Carolyn Webster-Stratton and Ted Taylor suggest very practical ways of winning over community workers in order to introduce effective parenting programmes. Most of the work has already been published elsewhere, but it is helpful to have it together in one volume.

Stephen Scott
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Doing Research with Children
A. Greig & J. Taylor

The authors come from social work and nursing backgrounds and have prepared a text that should be useful for professionals with little or no background in child development or research methodology. Practical exercises are provided after each chapter to guide teaching. Divided into three parts, Part I summarises theories, Part II concentrates on methodology, reviewing quantitative and qualitative approaches and describing some classic strategies used in developmental enquiry. Guidelines are given about working with children. The third part discusses the ethics of research with children and it might have been more effective to start the book with this topic.

Jacqueline Barnes
Royal Free and University College Medical College, London

Homeless Children. Problems and Needs
P. Vostanis & S. Cumella (Eds.)

Homelessness is still a growing problem—recent figures suggest it has risen by 25% in London during the period August 1998–99 alone. The very real implications for large numbers of young people are authoritatively presented and graphically illustrated in this book.

A strong message running throughout is that homelessness is but a link in a chain of multiple disadvantage. Children involved are especially likely to have experienced family breakdowns and violence as well as other difficulties and, once in temporary accommodation, they are at increased risk of accidents and poor health. In addition, crowding and other stresses associated with homelessness can lead to behavioural and emotional difficulties, frequent school changes can result in educational problems, and socially isolated and pressured parents can affect parenting.

Housing policy, and access to health, education, social and voluntary sector services by homeless families, is also discussed. A final useful chapter by the editors reiterates the key themes and expounds a strategy for family homelessness. This strategy aims to prevent homelessness, provide high quality emergency accommodation, ensure the continued schooling of children, guarantee appropriate health and social care, and make rapid access to affordable and permanent housing a priority.

The volume as a whole fills a gap in an extensive literature that nonetheless boasts rather few good comprehensive summaries of the problems and needs of homeless children. It would, however, seem primarily directed as researchers and others accustomed to the fairly dense style in which it is written. While this is an important audience, an additional succinct summary could be useful in getting the messages across to more policy makers and practitioners. Homelessness is, as proven by this book, a major contemporary social problem and as such it requires action as well as understanding.

Nicola Mudge
National Children’s Bureau, London

Focus on Clinical Audit in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
Carol Joughin & Emma Hardman

This is a tremendously useful systematic guide to clinical audit theory and practice that I adopted so quickly as a reference tool in every day work that I nearly forgot to review it. The core of the presentation is a collection of audit projects submitted from centres all over the country. Each account is neatly arranged in the same format recommended in the introduction which is clearly based on a set of guiding principles described at the beginning under the “Clinical Audit Cycle”.

A great deal of thought has been given by the authors to the layout of this work in order to achieve a very high degree of accessibility. This includes almost mesmeric but highly effective repetition of a graphic illustrating the audit cycle and highlighting within it the relevance of particular sections of the text and the aspects of this cycle illustrated by the examples. Other similar helpful features include colour-coded reference tabs on the leading edge of pages and page numbers at the bottom, outer corner of pages so one can flip through quickly to the desired section. It would be invidious to pick out particular audits from the examples by 26 contributors for comment. The range is impressive and includes everything from comprehensive audits of outcome to simple consumer satisfaction surveys. Each example comes complete with data collection sheets and examples of forms and letters for use in similar audits. There are extensive specific and general references on audit topics, a glossary of audit terms, lists of useful resources and addresses of organisations involved in audit planning and promotion.

This is a very practical publication, which will be of great use to clinicians and managers in CAMHS wishing to set up audit systems and is thoroughly recommended. The authors plan a second edition in 2000 so readers of the Review should prepare to send in their contributions. This is an ideal format for sharing audit information around the country. Focus is also running an e-mail network to share this type of information, which can be accessed by sending details to Kirsty. MacLean-Steel@virgin.net

Patrick Byrne
South London and Maudsley NHS Trust

Child Development for Child Care and Protection Workers
B. Daniel, S. Wassell, & R. Gilligan

This book arose out of a course in child protection studies. It is written as a textbook with case studies, sample questions and summaries at the end of each chapter. The title is a bit misleading, as the book is written within the context of attachment theory and uses this as its theoretical approach. It is not a book on Child Development in the more widely understood meaning of the term.

It does, however, attempt to interpret attachment theory and apply it to those
children who are most often seen by child care and protection workers. It is clearly written and contains useful information on observation techniques and interventions.

Chapter 2, Developing Relationships, explains secure and insecure attachment. It emphasises the importance of existing relationships, however poor, for the child, and deals with making new relationships with foster carers. Observation skills are stressed, with suggestions of ways in which to sharpen these skills. The social context for the child is taken into consideration.

Chapter 3, Parenting, looks at the child’s needs. There is a list of helpful and unhelpful aspects of parenting, which can be used as a guide to assessment. Examples of cases where parents are unable to understand the emotional complexity of human relationships are included. The authors point out that a parent’s own attachment experience can influence parenting style. This is one of the most important statements in this book and is invaluable in assessing parenting ability.

Chapter 4, Resilience and Vulnerability, focuses on identifying and harnessing particular strengths and advantages for an individual child. Working definitions of resilience, vulnerability, adversity and protective environment are provided. Guidelines are given for identifying vulnerability, the impact of adverse circumstances and experience of separation and loss. The framework can be used to formulate interventions, set targets and analyse events in the life of the child.

Chapter 5 examines Adversity and the Protective Environment and includes the influences on the child’s development of maternal depression, marital discord and domestic violence. The effects of various forms of abuse (emotional/psychological, physical and sexual) are also considered. The framework of adversity, vulnerability, adversity and protective environment is used as a guide during observations. Appendix III, Assessment of Adolescent Development, is used to identify strengths in the current situation when planning interventions.

Child Protection courses often place a great deal of emphasis on the physical well being of the child, as physical abuse is obvious and can be documented easily. This book puts its emphasis on the emotional development of children, and gives the workers in the field guidelines for assessing this and possible reasons for atypical development. It will be a valuable guide for students and teachers of Child Protection.

Sheila Richard
London

Children, Child Abuse and Child Protection. Placing Children Centrally
The Violence Against Children Study Group

This book is an update of its predecessor, Taking child abuse seriously, written by the same group in 1990. Developments since, including the implementation of the Children Act, panoply of government guidance and continuing public debate about child protection, have brought about this substantial rewrite. The group has reconstituted somewhat but still includes five of the original members; most have a social work background, though a Detective Inspector, Health Visitor, Court Welfare Officer, and three Lecturers in Psychology are amongst the 20 contributors.

There has undoubtedly been sufficient change in child protection guidance and practice to warrant this new publication; it is, however, a shame that the book has been published just too early for the influential document Quality protects, and—more recently still—the new Working together, not to have been included. The book is divided into four parts: Placing Children’s Issues as Central, Issues of Gender and Generation, Issues of Multi-disciplinary and Inter-agency Working, and An Overview of the Residential Care System. Many thorny issues were tackled but there were notable omissions. On a theoretical level, there was nothing substantial on class, which disappointed me given the social studies background of many of the contributors, and on a practice level, little consideration of the impact of parental and/or child participation in the child protection process. I would have liked to have found more about the often exquisitely difficult issues of parental mental ill health, particularly ‘personality disorder’, which is problematic for many different professionals in child protection.

In content, I found the chapters uneven in quality, but in general improving significantly as the book progressed. I liked best those chapters that were clear, jargon-free and thoughtful, such as the chapters on Children and Adolescents who Sexually Abuse by Masson, Child Protection and Domestic Violence by Ashworth and Erooga, and Sexuality, Sexual Abuse and Children’s Homes by Green and Parkin. Some other chapters, particularly the first two, I found unhelpful, laboured and unsophisticated psychologically. I was surprised that Lynne Murray’s seminal work was not mentioned in the chapter on The Health Visitor, nor indeed NEWPIN, welcome though a chapter is in a book such as this.

All in all, a moderately useful collection that could best be used by tapping into individual chapters of a library copy.

Jane Roberts
London

Books by Members

Mental Health and Growing Up (2nd Edn.) Factsheets for Parents, Teachers and Young People
Guinevere Tufnell (Ed.)

Factsheets can be duplicated and distributed free of charge as long as the Royal College of Psychiatrists is properly credited and no profit is gained from their use.