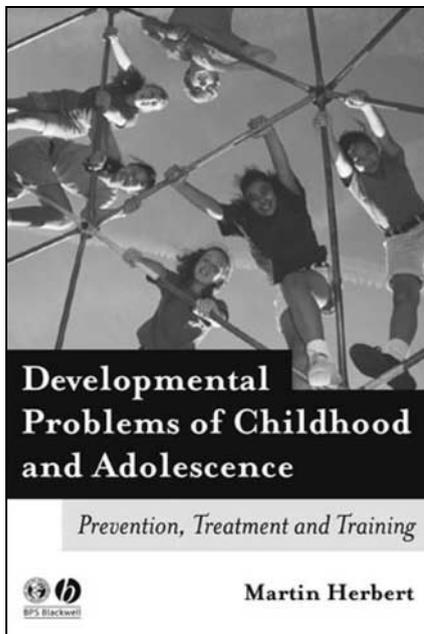


## Book reviews

EDITED BY SIDNEY CROWN, FEMI OYEBODE and ROSALIND RAMSAY

### Developmental Problems of Childhood and Adolescence: Prevention, Treatment and Training

By Martin Herbert. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. 2004. 264 pp. £24.95 (pb). ISBN 1405115920



Martin Herbert has written an excellent companion to his earlier book, *Typical and Atypical Development: From Conception to Adolescence* (Herbert, 2002). The first book dealt with typical behaviour, cognition and emotional development. This book discusses a wide variety of developmental problems and disorders, and provides an approach to prevention and treatment as well as training issues. The approach taken is one of considering the tasks that confront individuals as they grow through childhood, using competence and achievement as the core to understanding.

The first 14 chapters are organised into five parts relating to the stages of childhood and adolescence; the various disorders are discussed in an organised format, repeated for each. These chapters give a clear description of the developmental problems

presented at each stage; they are comprehensive, but describe the conditions efficiently and succinctly and provide easy reading. They are an excellent overview of a broad spectrum of disorders, placed in a developmental framework that makes them easy to understand and remember – in my view, a good way for students and practitioners to assimilate a multiplicity of facts painlessly.

Chapter 15 describes the work needed to plan treatment and training programmes, as well as care plans. This chapter is useful to current practitioners as it puts the process of formulation into a very helpful framework. Professor Herbert is one of the few authors who articulate the need for ‘intuition, insight, imagination and empathetic communication’. It is good to see an argument that practice should have a sound base in tested theory but can be greatly enriched by the use of clinical skills which are perhaps more instinctive than scientific. There is also an acknowledgement that there is a need to be effective in influencing policy-making, which is often not part of a clinician’s explicit role. The chapter describes approaches to assessment and formulation and sets these out clearly in terms of questions to guide the process.

The last chapter provides a guide to possible resources that may help families. Subtitled ‘How and where to find help’, it sets out the need for epidemiological information and describes the sources of care that are available. A useful description of commonly provided services is given. This is followed by ‘Practice approaches’, which comments on the differences in approach between the medical and psychological professions. Criticisms of the medical approach in relation to taxonomy are fairly stated, but rather brief in analysis. The psychological practice is limited to a list of therapies that can be offered by those with the relevant training, and a description of the attributes of a collaborative approach to clients. In my view, this section could have been omitted as it draws an unnecessary distinction between the professions. The

appendix is full of useful resources and information and enhances the usefulness of the book.

Overall, I think that this book should fill an important place in the shelves of practitioners of many different disciplines. My copy is on its way to becoming well used.

**Herbert, M. (2002)** *Typical and Atypical Development: From Conception to Adolescence*. Oxford: Blackwell.

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### Anxiety Disorders in Adults: A Clinical Guide

By Vladan Starcevic. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2004. 440 pp. £35.99 (hb). ISBN 0195156064

Vladan Starcevic’s book reminds me of an age that I thought had passed. Nothing to do with John Major’s vision of ‘old maids cycling to evensong’, or even of Tony Blair’s nostalgia for ‘respect’, but of a time when general adult psychiatrists were permitted to treat patients with anxiety disorders and weren’t made to feel embarrassed for doing so.

I believe that it is right that a book about anxiety is aimed at a psychiatric readership. The managerialist discourse of schizophrenia as ‘severe enduring mental illness’ leads to the view that other illnesses are ‘minor’ and therefore may be treated by less skilful (and less well paid) practitioners. Although there is much evidence to support the use of clinical guidelines in anxiety, to whom do patients with severe agoraphobia or obsessive-compulsive disorder turn when eight sessions of cognitive-behavioural therapy and six weeks of taking a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor have failed them? If my straw poll of trainees’ knowledge of therapeutic dosages of tricyclic antidepressants or of non-cognitive psychological formulations is representative, the patient referred to a psychiatrist may have a wasted journey.

The other reason Vladan Starcevic’s book makes me nostalgic is that it is a single-authored book dealing with a single diagnostic category. After an introductory chapter, the book consists of a chapter for each anxiety disorder. Each chapter covers