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I would recommend this book and hope it will be circulated within mental health services.

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Dwarfism: Medical and Psychosocial Aspects of Profound Short Stature

Betty M. Adelson
Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005, \$30.00, pb, 342 pp.
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That we live in an increasingly individualistic age is axiomatic. Personal and social differences are widely advocated, and every group can be said to have its own consciousness. At the same time, we live in an age in which the causes of medical differences are frantically sought and the elimination of certain conditions

espoused. People with disabilities find themselves in two worlds: one that advocates difference (at least nominally) and another that seeks to prevent the conditions that give rise to those differences.

Within this context, this book gives us a historical, clinical and personal account of the lives of people with the extremely visible if little understood condition of short stature. It explores the conflicting and disturbing nature of our understanding of profound short stature and the experiences of some of the people who have it.

It consists of five chapters covering three main themes: medical aspects, psycho-social aspects and real-life stories. The first chapter covers the medical history and current medical knowledge of profound short stature, and includes a rather long section on the life and works of those clinicians who have contributed to knowledge in this field. The psycho-social aspects are covered by discussion of the issue of intelligence and personality, and how these are affected by a variety of conditions that result in profound short

stature. From chapter three the focus of the book changes to include more 'real-life' experiences of people with profound short stature, and there is discussion of parenting issues and the history of organisations.

The book is addressed largely to an American readership, although it does have some resonance for an international audience. It is written by an American psychologist who is the parent of an adult daughter with profound short stature. The perspective is mainly that of a parent, although clinicians who wish to gain a broader understanding of the conditions related to and the treatments associated with what is still thought of pejoratively as dwarfism will also benefit from this book. Most importantly, it presents the experience of people with profound short stature who live in and cope with a world that masks its discriminatory tendencies behind a façade of individualism.

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