

After considering the definitions of addiction, West rethinks how we appraise behavioural theories and asks us to use 'observation of nature' as a starting point. He argues for a Popperian stance, that a theory is wrong if a counter-example exists, then sets the scene for his own theory with an erudite review of the literature.

The reader is walked through the evolution of his theory before it is introduced as 'PRIME theory' (plans, responses, impulses/inhibitory forces, motives and evaluations); a hierarchical representation of the motivational system which serves well as a template for human behaviour despite the unwieldy schematics.

West blends PRIME with chaos theory in a Pythagorean attempt to understand behaviour in mathematical terms. He invites us to think of the motivational system as an epigenetic landscape with hills and valleys (Chreods) through which a ball (time) travels resulting in a number of potential future outcomes depending on its course. He acknowledges the metaphor in applying chaos theory to addictive behaviour and this book joins a growing discourse on the subject. The concept is user friendly and explains why addictions manifest so differently despite often similar underlying pathologies. A strength is that it allows for such variance, but as a result the theory becomes too inclusive for rigorous testing. My limited understanding of chaos theory left me wondering whether human factors such as the capacity for mentalisation might influence its relevance to psychiatric disorders.

In citing economic and neurophysiological theories, the author's intention is that other disciplines could add to the work. It would also be interesting to hear how PRIME interfaces with cultural and psychodynamic constructs. In the closing chapter, West applies his theory to addiction and suggests approaches for intervention that I would like to have heard more about, such as how one might detect an imminent Chreod bifurcation.

In the end I felt that, in addition to PRIME theory, the book had introduced a valuable representation of what could be called good psychiatric formulation. West encourages us to think differently about people and populations with substance use problems, and I now find myself wondering how my clients' epigenetic landscapes might be looking. The work is grounded in common sense and goes a long way towards explaining what the author calls the

big observations ('observation of people in their natural habitat or uncontested scientific evidence'), and it adroitly deals with the challenges inherent in postulating any unified theory of human behaviour. He leaves the way clear for future research and is ready to pass on the baton in the collective endeavour of incremental science.

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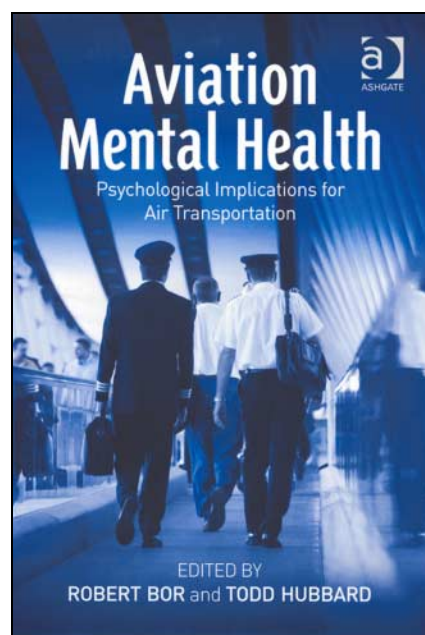
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### **Aviation Mental Health: Psychological Implications for Air Transportation**

Edited by Robert Bor & Todd Hubbard.

Ashgate Publishing. 2006. 376pp. £65.00 (hb).

ISBN 0754643719



If you are looking for a book to read on a long haul flight, this is not the one! A random selection of some of the key issues discussed in *Aviation Mental Health* reveals why. Pilot suicide by aircraft and the nature of language used in airport announcements 'this is your last and final call' being two topics that may set off a train of thought that is not modified even by the fascinating fact that air travel is 18 times safer than staying at home.

Aviation mental health is a topic that impinges on many aspects of medical practice, from the management of flying phobias to severe in-flight medical emergencies such as acute psychotic episodes. This is perhaps the first textbook to cover the whole range of aviation mental health from selection and management of flight and cabin crew through to the management of the psychological consequences of flying and crashing.

With such a wide target audience it has perhaps been difficult in this first edition to balance the content between specialist and generalist information. The chapters range from quite technical multi-author submissions on sleep and mental performance with general applications through to single-author chapters on highly specialised topics such as psychological aspects of astronaut selection. Overall, however, the content is well balanced with an appropriate level of theory and advice on practical management.

The style of the book, as with many multi-author collections, lacks coherence. Perhaps the editors will be able to address this in a second edition? The layout of the chapters within the book is confusing. Part 1, 'psychological issues of flight and cabin crew', deals with issues relating to passengers, whereas Part 2, 'psychological processes amongst passengers and crew', does not. The third section, 'related themes in aviation' has the appearance of a standby line of passengers who couldn't be fitted into one of the previous two sections, the content ranging from occupational factors in pilot mental health through to aviation psychology in South Africa.

Overall this is a useful practical guide to an important area of occupational mental health which, despite the inevitable teething troubles of a first edition, is well worth reading.

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### **Eating Disorders in Children and Adolescents**

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Cambridge University Press. 2006. 323pp.

£40.00 (pb). ISBN 0521613124

This international and multi-authored volume is aimed at practitioners and researchers in the field of eating disorders in children and adolescents. The book is