cognitive status examination should not be missed. There are a few omissions. Somato-
form disorders additional to pseudo-
seizures as well as sleep disorders could
have been mentioned and it would have
been interesting to have a little more time
spent on movement disorders, since they
lend themselves so well to video presenta-
tions. However, I enjoyed the package, as I
am sure trainees and tutors will. It should
be used as a model for many other areas of
medical teaching.


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Munchausen’s Syndrome by Proxy. Current Issues in Assessment, Treatment and Research
Edited by Gwen Adshhead & Deborah Brooke.
£29.00 (hb). ISBN 1-86094-134-6

The stated aim of this book is ‘to provide a
multi-disciplinary and international per-
spective on current understanding of
Munchausen’s syndrome by proxy’ (MBPS).
It fulfils this task efficiently. Beginning
with a brief ‘20-year overview’ of the
subject, it offers an interesting
international and cross-cultural view. The
contributors are well-known in the field:
Jureidini and Donald, Southall, Samuels,
Jones and Newbold, Emsinon, Bluglass and
Bools. The latter writes well of new
directions for research and service develop-
ment for the future. The perspectives
covered include MBPS in the medical
system and primary care; legal, social work
and guardian ad litem viewpoints; the
detection and assessment of abusing fa-
milies; and the treatment of perpetrators
and victims.

Perhaps the most original chapter is by
one of the editors, Gwen Adshhead, on
ethical and public policy issues in the
management of MBPS. She explores the
clinical dilemmas and consequent anxieties
engendered by different clinical relation-
ships and duties, which often clash in cases
of MBPS. She also provides an overview
of the power differentials and ethical
responsibilities within the doctor–patient
relationship and of the sometimes conflic-
ting responsibilities of the doctor to third
parties, family and society. The issue of
MBPS and child abuse is examined as a
paradigmatic locus of special tension and
frank conflict for professionals, for exam-
ple in the question of whether a doctor has
‘a professional right to deceive in
order to do good’ – as in the case of
covert video surveillance. These discus-
sions deserve greater exploration.

There has been something of a glut of
volumes on this subject in the past few
years – in contrast to a relative paucity of
research (e.g. Schreier & Libow, 1993;
Parnell & Day, 1997; Emison & Postlethwaite,
2000, for review see Cordess, 2001). Adshhead & Brooke
could be counted unfortunate to follow so closely
in the footsteps of the last of these: this
subject advances slowly and, since it has
only a poor empirical base, there was little
new to be said.

Although this book presents solid find-
ings – such as they are – and viewpoints in
its 17 chapters, each chapter is too brief to
allow contributors to get into their authori-
stral stride. The text, therefore, reads awk-
wardly, as something between lecture notes
and narrative. Typographical errors, such as
the erroneous rendering (twice) on the
first page of the introduction of ‘factitious’
as ‘fictitious’ (a common but unfortunate
mistake in a book on the subject), left me
feeling that the editors had not been well
served by the standard of publishing
production.

Abuse: A Practical Approach (book review). British

Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy Abuse: A Practical
Proxy Syndrome. Misunderstood Child Abuse.
Munchausen by Proxy Syndrome. New York: Guilford
Press.

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Attention, Genes and ADHD
Edited by Florence Levy & David Hay. Hove:
Brunner-Routledge. 2001. 272 pp. £30.00
(hb). ISBN 1 84169 193 3

Recent research on the neuroscience and
genetics of attention-deficit hyperactivity
disorder (ADHD) has transformed the
intellectual landscape of its discourse, if
not of modern child neuropsychiatry. This
slender volume, with many high-quality
reviews, represents one of its landmarks.
It provides a state-of-the-art summary of
major findings in both behavioural (quan-
titative) and molecular genetics of this
fascinating disorder. Yet the editors go
beyond the remits of such an undertaking:
it proposes many fresh questions, as well as
providing a critique of the limitations and
methodological issues of works hitherto
undertaken. This is therefore a book that
would interest and intrigue non-specialists
and experts alike.

The bulk of the book is on quantitative
genetics, that is, genetic epidemiology
based on twin and adoption studies. There
are also chapters on molecular genetics,
which deal with DNA, allelic frequency
and candidate genes. These are two distinct
intellectual disciplines that are sharply
demarcated by differing methodologies
and techniques. The editors have included
an introductory chapter on quantitative
genetics (Chapter 2) to equip non-specialist
readers with basic principles of the subject
and explanations on path diagrams. Thus,
non-specialists need not be deterred. Chap-
ter 3 examines the diagnostic validity of
ADHD and its subtypes in relation to latent
genetic substrates from a quantitative