review


David Taylor, Robert Kerwin & Carol Paton
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What began as a description of the prescribing practice in a particular trust has now become an essential reference for anyone with the responsibility for prescribing or monitoring psychotropics and anticonvulsants. The first edition of the Maudsley Prescribing Guidelines pre-dated guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. This latest edition includes evidence-based guidance and that of acknowledged experts on the pharmacological management of psychiatric disorders. In addition to basic information concerning the preferred medicine for routine treatment of the acute or first episode it also deals with relapse and resistant conditions. There are also recommendations for the emergency situation and the management of side-effects, together with information on the appropriateness, validity and interpretation of monitoring serum levels of psychotropics and anticonvulsants.

This edition includes over 20 new sections, and existing topics have been revised and updated to include all evidence available at the end of January 2005. The section on benzodiazepines now covers benzodiazepine-induced disinhibition, dependence and detoxification. The chapter on children and adolescents has been completely rewritten to include more information on the use of psychotropics. A particularly useful section on the treatment of special patient groups has also been significantly expanded to cover many more of the therapeutic dilemmas commonly encountered in everyday practice. The final chapter now contains advice concerning communication and the use of antibiotics in psychiatry.

Apart from the first chapter on monitoring of plasma levels, the chapters are organised according to disorder or specific patient population. This makes the book very easy to use. The use of tables facilitates rapid retrieval of information and easy comparisons. There is also a comprehensive index and the whole volume is well referenced throughout. The authors are all acclaimed experts in their field and have also enlisted the help of other practising specialists. This is a unique volume of immense value for guiding the trainee and the more experienced in the rational, safe and effective use of psychotropic medication for those with mental illness.

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