BOOK REVIEWS


CPT Handbook for Psychiatrists is a concise manual describing all aspects of the development and utilization of current procedural terminology (CPT) in the clinical practice of psychiatry. The Physicians' Current Procedural Terminology was developed and first published by the American Medical Association in 1966. The purpose of the coding system is to provide a uniform language to describe medical, surgical and diagnostic procedures. It provides a common frame of reference for providers, patients, and third-party payers. The CPT Handbook for Psychiatrists provides specific focus on the terminology relevant to psychiatrists and other mental health clinicians and offers guidance tailored to psychiatrists. The Handbook is written and organized in a manner that is user friendly and helpful for those who are uninitiated in the use of CPT.

The CPT Handbook for Psychiatrists grew out of the author's work with the American Psychiatric Association Work Group on Codes and Reimbursements. A primary goal of the Work Group and the Handbook is to educate psychiatrists regarding the proper use of coding procedures. The Work Group was formed initially in the context of allegations of fraud by the federal government and the Handbook emphasizes the risks of imprecise documentation leading to adverse consequences for the clinician.

The Handbook provides a basic background about CPT in coding in the initial chapters. The history of the development of Physicians' Current Procedural Terminology not only provides useful information on the background and construction of CPT, but provides insight into the political debates that surround the practice and financing of psychiatric practice. Chapter 3 is a particularly useful discussion of the psychiatric evaluation and coding procedure. Chapters 5 and 6 dwell on third party carrier issues. It is here that the author wishes to convey some of the frustrations associated with the interface with intermediaries in the course of seeking reimbursement based on CPT codes. For some, the polemical aspect of the author's description of the encounters or presumed motivations may serve as a distraction or detract from the very solid and informative content of the manual. Chapter 7 provides the latest information on needed treatment documentation. Chapter 8 summarizes the issues confronting the psychiatrist and addresses practical realities of current clinical practice.

The CPT Handbook provides excellent guidance on the use of CPT codes and for many will serve as the sole reference needed to navigate the complexities of reimbursement. Particularly helpful are the chapters that give the clinician very clear and precise guidance regarding documentation of the clinical encounter. The author describes how precise documentation not only aids reimbursement, but represents sound clinical practice that can reduce the psychiatrist's vulnerability in audits or suits stemming from claims or malpractice disputes.

The CPT Handbook for Psychiatrists is an essential reference for the practicing psychiatrist and will be of interest to a wider audience of clinicians interested in healthcare financing and clinical practice. While reimbursement documentation guidelines may continue to change at a rapid pace, this volume provides a basic framework for
understanding that makes it a valuable addition to any clinician's working library. The messages of the Handbook are vital to successful clinical practice.

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The introduction to the book states its aim to “bring together the best current theoretical and clinical thinking on the subject of sexual aggression.” Some readers will find this statement and the title of the book misleading because the content is almost exclusively devoted to topics related to adolescent sexual aggression. They will quickly forgive this oversight, unless they are entirely disinterested in the topic, because this volume delivers a thoughtful review of a subject that is hard to come by in a single source as readable as this one.

Eleven chapters, written by various authors, are divided into two sections. The first section provides an overview of sexually aggressive behavior from the perspective of both perpetrator and victim. These chapters introduce the reader to the epidemiology of sexual aggression, the complex interplay of individual, family, and cultural factors associated with the appearance and maintenance of aggressive sexual behavior, and those factors associated with victim risk and response to sexual abuse and assault. The second section reviews and critiques the state of knowledge about the phenomenology of male and female juvenile sexual offenders and approaches to their assessment and treatment. These evaluation and treatment chapters lend a multidimensional, systemic perspective to the comprehensive evaluation of adolescent sex offenders, and highlight the importance of multimodal strategies to responsibly address the needs of individuals, victims, and public safety. Although attention to ethical considerations in the evaluation and treatment of and research about these youths was scattered throughout the text, a chapter specifically focusing on these considerations would have been worthwhile.

The authors and editor of this volume are to be commended for the care they have taken to avoid dogma and speculation by identifying and qualifying their sources of information and critically analyzing the findings and conclusions of empirical research in this nascent field of inquiry. Research examining the origins and phenomena of sexual aggression, treatment of offenders, and victim outcomes is especially vulnerable to methodological problems of retrospective analysis, absence of control conditions, the limits of accuracy of human memory, distortion, secondary gain, and other factors that confound certainty about any complexly determined behavior or psychological outcome. Much of the literature is based on clinical anecdote and not on peer-reviewed research. In responsibly providing appropriate caveats and warnings to those readers less familiar with the strengths, weaknesses and limits of knowledge about sexual aggression in any population, and particularly about the juvenile sexual offender, the authors have crafted a reliable and intellectually honest resource. The chapters are sensibly referenced, and