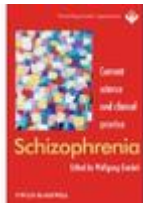


The Science of Schizophrenia: Synthesizing the Latest in Research and Practice

A review of



Schizophrenia: Current Science and Clinical Practice

by Wolfgang Gaebel (Ed.)

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As the first edition in a new series of titles from the World Psychiatric Association, *Schizophrenia: Current Science and Clinical Practice* brings together international experts in the field of schizophrenia to present overviews of contemporary scientific findings on the etiology and treatment of the disorder. There are eight chapters in this edited volume, and they span all levels of analysis and a range of perspectives.

The content accurately depicts the challenges inherent in studying such a complex disorder. Highlighting the latest findings in neurobiology, genetics, social cognition, and neurocognition, as well as medical and psychosocial treatments, this volume provides a valuable resource for students, practitioners, and clinical researchers. The chapters are written for a sophisticated readership, and familiarity with neurobiology and contemporary genetic terminology is required to benefit from the in-depth descriptions of research advances in these areas.

The editor, Wolfgang Gaebel, reminds us that 2011 marks the 100th anniversary of Eugen Bleuler's coining of the term *schizophrenia*, and the gains in our understanding of the etiology, phenomenology, and treatment of schizophrenia over the course of the past century have been great. Yet, as the authors of every chapter highlight, accompanying the increases in what is known are many questions—both old and new—that remain unanswered. Consequently, each chapter contains a review (some more comprehensive than others) of the current state of the literature in the various domains listed above, as well as the challenges that lie ahead in our efforts to unravel the very complex etiologic processes that give rise to schizophrenia.

One of the strengths of *Schizophrenia: Current Science and Clinical Practice* is that attention is paid to the full course of the disorder, from early recognition of the prodromal stage (Chapter 5) to management of chronic psychosis (Chapter 8). Further, a substantial portion of the book is devoted to current best practices in treatment at the various stages of the disorder (Chapters 5–8).

This is perhaps especially important in the putatively prodromal stage; as McGorry and Goldstone note in Chapter 5, it is increasingly seen as an optimal time for intervention in the hopes of preventing or at least delaying the onset of psychosis. McGorry and Goldstone also highlight the ethical issues inherent in treating an at-risk population, which have been central in the ongoing debate about the inclusion of a psychosis risk syndrome in the DSM–5 (Nelson & Yung, 2011).

Treatment implications are also discussed in chapters that primarily focus on etiology and phenomenology (Chapters 3–4), thus illustrating the importance of empirically supported intervention. The authors describe how advances in our understanding of the biological underpinnings of the disorder may directly inform efforts toward individually tailored treatments.

At a time when technology is advancing at such a rapid rate, as captured by Walters, O'Donovan, and Owen in their discussion of genetic research in schizophrenia (Chapter 3), it would be very difficult for any book on the topic to be entirely up to date at the time of its publication. In this volume, there are important topics that remain uncovered, such as epigenetics (Oh & Petronis, 2008) and electrophysiology (Rissling, Makeig, Braff, & Light, 2010).

Discussion of these lines of investigation, especially epigenetics, would have provided some bridges among chapters. For example, an overview of epigenetic processes and event-related potentials (ERPs) would serve to illustrate links among findings in genetics, pathophysiology, and neurocognition.

This volume is not intended for practitioners looking for in-depth coverage of psychotherapy for schizophrenia or psychosis more generally. Rather, the chapters devoted to psychosocial treatments might provide a valuable source of references from which those who are so inclined can seek more information. Also, clinicians who are not well versed in

basic neuroscience and genetics may find portions of the book difficult to comprehend, as the authors delve into the intricacies of recent scientific findings.

Nonetheless, *Schizophrenia: Current Science and Clinical Practice* will be an asset to those who are seeking a current and sophisticated synthesis of the field, combined with stimulating discussions of some pivotal controversies in both research and treatment. Gaebel has assembled a distinguished group of contributors who are more than up to the task of grappling with the challenge of discerning the implications of cutting-edge research for clinical intervention.

References

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