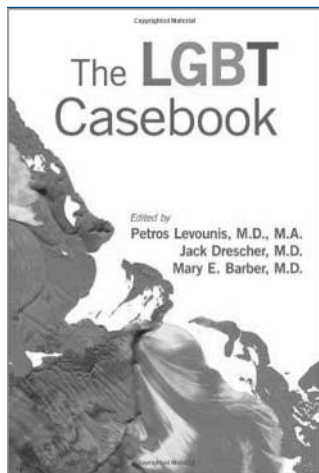


## Book reviews

Edited by Allan Beveridge, Femi Oyeboode  
and Rosalind Ramsay



### The LGBT Casebook

Edited by Petros Levounis,  
Jack Drescher & Mary Barber.  
American Psychiatric Publishing,  
2012.  
US\$62.00 (pb). 324 pp.  
ISBN: 9781585624218

A young patient of mine described his mother running to the toilet to vomit and then disappearing out of the house for 24 hours when he told her he was gay. This is not the struggle of your average student. The difficulty confronting and dealing with both external and internalised homophobia, as well as coping with the nature of difference, leads some lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people to despair. For many years we have known that, despite more liberal attitudes in Western countries, rates of attempted suicide and self-harm are higher in LGBT people than in their heterosexual counterparts. Recently, it has become clearer that rates of completed suicide are also much higher – at least in men – even in those in the most stable of situations such as civil partnerships. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people are more vulnerable to a range of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. This is most likely the result of the difficulties inherent in growing up gay and lesbian in societies which reject homosexuality. Bereavement in particular is more difficult to cope with when the exact nature of relationships may not be known by friends and work colleagues. Religious and spiritual difficulties are common given that most Abrahamic faiths reject the concept of same-sex relationships. Homophobia is nowhere more apparent than in mainstream Christianity and Islam where attempts to ‘heal’ people by making them heterosexual are growing increasingly common, particularly in the USA.

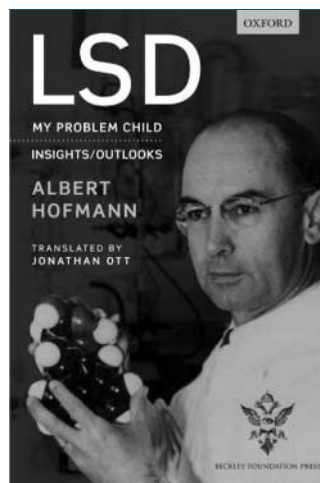
Mental health professionals need to be aware of these issues and this excellent clinical casebook is a step in that direction. It is an intensely pragmatic book which is embedded in the case histories of real people and which deals with issues of mental and general well-being in LGBT people. It begins with basic principles of when, how and how often LGBT people negotiate the minefields of revealing one’s sexuality to family, close friends and colleagues, before dealing with issues of parenting and psychotherapy. There then follows an extensive series of clinical examples, which deal with particular mental disorders in this group. This is the meat of the book on which the editors place particular importance.

This casebook will be extremely useful to mental health professionals who are unaware of or unfamiliar with the issues faced by LGBT people and will go some way towards reducing the discrimination and prejudice they experience, even within

mental health services. Each case history ends with a number of key points and questions that lend it particularly well to continuing professional development.

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doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.112.120725



### LSD: My Problem Child

By Albert Hofmann  
(transl. Jonathan Ott)  
Oxford University Press. 2013.  
£24.99 (hb). 248 pp.  
ISBN: 9780199639410

When the Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann accidentally discovered the hallucinogenic effects of LSD in 1943, he went for a bicycle ride. Commentators have repeated this legendary tale frequently in the past 70 years but Hofmann’s book is the definitive text – and this new edition offers some interesting contemporary insights.

Edited by Amanda Feilding of the UK’s Beckley Foundation, a charitable institution researching psychedelics as tools for medicine and growth, and translated by Jonathan Ott, the original 1979 text has been given a facelift, with translator’s notes and the addition of previously unpublished essays written by Hofmann in his later years, which provide fresh context to the chemist’s thoughts and philosophical ruminations of his 102-year life.

Psychedelic therapy is now a clinical inevitability. Woken from its 40-year, politically induced slumber by contemporary, methodologically robust research, this time around evidence-based medicine is on the side of psychedelic drugs. They *do* work, they *are* safe and they *can* have clinical uses. New research with LSD, psilocybin, MDMA, ibogaine, ketamine, ayahuasca and cannabis is springing up everywhere, from Harvard and Johns Hopkins University to University College London, Imperial College and Cardiff University. The wonder drug, which Hofmann reluctantly renamed his problem child at the end of the 1960s, has emerged from adolescence into a mature and reflective adult with a valuable job to do. Used with care, Hofmann’s LSD can help patients access and resolve repressed traumatic memories. Where current pharmacotherapies with antidepressants and antipsychotics often mask symptoms and trap patients in co-dependence, psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy can get to the heart of the trauma and offer durable remission without the need for daily maintenance medication.

We are in the midst of a psychedelic renaissance but tread carefully with clinical governance as our guide. Hofmann was a conservative adventurer; embracing the spiritual potential of LSD, clear that the doctors must not be allowed to run the show, but acutely aware of the unhelpful hippie image that slowed research. With DSM-5’s publication psychiatry continues its