

British) for further reference and debate. Having checked several out, I found them relevant and useful.

This is an engaging short text, which does not set out to be (and is not) a reference guide. For newcomers to research, however, it more than achieves its aim of enticement, and brings with it a sense of fun and adventure rooted in sound advice and scientific principle.

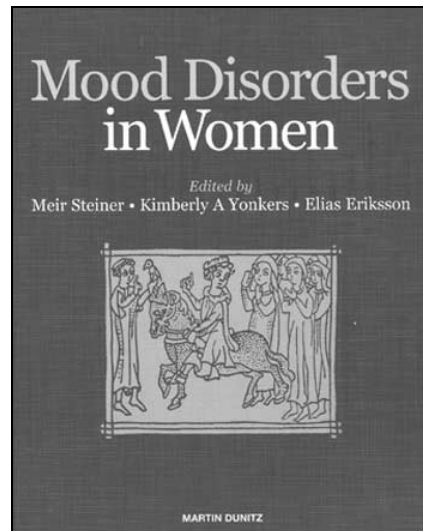
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### Mood Disorders in Women

Edited by Meir Steiner, Kimberly Yonkers & Elias Eriksson. London: Martin Dunitz. 2000. 368 pp. £65.00 (hb). ISBN 1 85307 545 5

The idea behind this book is to provide a comprehensive overview of all aspects of mood disorders in women. The 31 chapters span epidemiology, neuroanatomical differences between the genders, neurochemistry and the effects of female sex hormones on brain and behaviour, through to the use of psychotropic medications during the perinatal period. In addition, there are chapters on specific disorders (such as unipolar and bipolar illnesses) and on specific treatment approaches. These are followed by chapters



on subjects such as drug and alcohol problems, pain, personality and eating disorders. The chapters are of variable quality and some authors appear to stick to their brief more rigorously than others. There are also some differences in perspective between the American and European (the minority) contributors.

The strength of this text is that it covers a wide spectrum of issues and offers useful advice on such topics as the use of psychotropic medication during breastfeeding. The layout of the chapters is easy on the eye, although more diagrams or summary boxes would have been welcome. The weaknesses of this book are two-fold.

First, it is not well-ordered. For example, it would have helped if there were subsections drawing common themes together. Second, there are considerable areas of overlap plus occasional significant omissions. For example, three chapters look at epidemiology and several cover various aspects of pharmacotherapy. The chapter on unipolar disorders and, to a lesser extent that on bipolar disorders are repetitive, almost representing précis of other chapters. This is not the authors' fault – the subjects are well reviewed – but it does suggest a lack of clarity in thinking about how to structure the text. There is a clear exposition of sex and gender differences in neuroanatomy and neurochemistry, but work on psychological as opposed to social models of depression is not dealt with in detail in the chapters on causal theories or psychological therapies.

In summary, this is a comprehensive textbook that is a helpful source of additional information about mood and other disorders in women. However, it is not a substitute for other handbooks of affective or mood disorder. It is a valuable reference text for students and junior doctors alike, and senior clinicians will also appreciate the information on more specific aspects of pharmacological treatment.

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