

Autism and Related Disorders

The Basic Handbook for
Mental Health, Primary Care
and Other Professionals

Edited by
Geraldine Holt and Nick Bouras



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Foreword

I am privileged to write the Foreword for the second production of the World Psychiatric Association's active Section of Psychiatry of Mental Retardation, following the widely distributed *Mental Health in Mental Retardation: The ABC for Mental Health, Primary Care and Other Professionals*, by Nick Bouras, Geraldine Holt, Ken Day and Anton Dosen. This had an impact on all the other 56 sections of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) and has spearheaded their educational output. *Autism and Related Disorders: The Basic Handbook for Mental Health, Primary Care and Other Professionals*, edited by Geraldine Holt and Nick Bouras, is another landmark in this challenging and interesting area of specialisation. The autistic disorders require the practitioner to work with different types of people, including the child or adult patient, the parents and other carers, those working in the school system, and other professionals involved in mental health. It is in many respects a primary care speciality. The diagnosis and management of the autistic syndrome require a great deal of knowledge about other childhood disorders, maturational processes, developmental disorders and cognitive development. The authors successfully manage to clarify and simplify a condition that is probably more prevalent than many other childhood and adult mental disorders.

The publication is clear, easy to understand and provides user-friendly guidelines for its practical implementation. The WPA Section of Psychiatry of Mental Retardation has succeeded in fulfilling the objectives of the WPA through this publication, by disseminating knowledge, improving care for the mentally ill, dealing with disabilities, promoting mental health and preserving the rights of the mentally ill.

I believe that this book will be a highlight of the Yokohama Congress in 2002. I shall be eagerly awaiting the section's next production, during the XIII Congress of Psychiatry, in Cairo in 2005.

Professor Ahmed Okasha
President Elect, WPA
Chairman of the WPA Ethics Committee

Preface

In some parts of the world, such as the UK, there are psychiatrists and psychologists specialising in the mental health needs of people with mental retardation. In many countries, however, this is not the case and people with mental retardation and mental disorders may be seen by general psychiatrists, paediatricians and other professionals without specialist knowledge of their problems.

This short publication of the Section of Psychiatry of Mental Retardation of the World Psychiatric Association aims to offer some basic guidelines on autism and related disorders. Both children and adults are covered.

There has been growing interest in and knowledge of this group of disorders. Their aetiology, multidisciplinary assessment and diagnosis are discussed. A range of interventions is described, including educational, behavioural, environmental and pharmacological.

A reference list is offered at the end.

Geraldine Holt and Nick Bouras