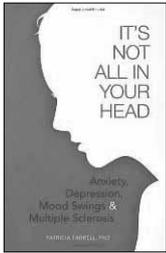


Book Reviews

It's Not All in Your Head: Anxiety, Depression, Mood Swings and Multiple Sclerosis

Patricia Farrell, PhD, Demos Health, New York, 2011
Paperback: 221 pages, includes index. Price: \$16.95

ISBN 978-1-932603-95-8



The opening paragraph of this book, titled: “Multiple Sclerosis Made Simple,” begins with the following nearly poetic description of the pathophysiology of the complicated immunological impairment in multiple sclerosis: “...the process (disease) is thought to be caused by

an attack of the body’s immune system on the delicate covering on nerves and areas of the brain related to mood, memory, judgment, concentration and movement.”

Due disclosure is herein required. I have been working as a psychiatric consultant for Israel’s Multiple Sclerosis Center at the Sheba Medical Center for over 20 years. I do not like light banter when it comes to this devastating chronic disease. Dr. Farrell writes with commitment and passion about living with the comorbid anxiety and depression that frequently complicate multiple sclerosis. Nevertheless her style made it very difficult for me to stay neutral as I read this book. The author often berates the physicians mentioned for doing a bad job of diagnosis and management. She also dispenses advice that as a trained psychiatrist I find hard to accept. An example pops up in the opening paragraphs of the book’s preface: “I believe that if you wish to take several tests to get an ‘official’ diagnosis of depression and/or anxiety, this can be accomplished quite easily on the Internet.”

The book is divided into nine major parts: MS made simple, the body-mind connection, riding the rollercoaster of MS, the “ugly twins” of depression and anxiety, learning to help yourself, handling guilt and maintaining resilience, maximizing memory to combat depression, coping strategies for everyday and the future is bright. Each part has its mix of solid data and encouraging advice together with truisms that are in fact

diminishing the standards and value of this book. I came away uncertain as to recommending this book to my patients. Will they act as Dr. Farrell says: “...(after finishing the book) Head straight to your computer or to your phone and take some action right now.” Will they sigh and say: “another ‘American’ feel-good book...”

I really do not know.

Yoram Barak
Bat Yam

Rekindling the Spirit: Creativity, Passion and the Prevention of Burnout in the Medical Profession

**Stanley Rabin, Benyamin Maoz,
Yuval Shorer and Andre Matalon**
Ramot Publishing, Tel Aviv University, 2010, 174 pages

ISBN: 978-965-274-459-3.

What are the components that contribute to the optimal functioning of health care professionals who persist in the face of difficulties? For doctors like me in daily practice it was gratifying to discover in this attractive book whose elements can enhance the level of my job satisfaction and reduce burnout.

Medical professionals have in the past paid little attention to the promotion of optimal mental health. However, over the past years there has been a substantial effort to attend to matters such as how to cope with burnout. The rate of burnout among physicians is considered to be high and it is a critical issue for healthcare delivery, as burnout can lead to decreased work performance and poorer treatment outcomes. High levels of exhaustion can cause less humanistic attitudes toward patients, and physicians who are satisfied with their careers are likely to provide better treatment.

The first chapters of this book are dedicated to general concepts that can contribute to better understanding of phenomena such as burnout in health care services. The second part is more specific and includes practical suggestions to improve creativity in health systems by using methods like an integrative approach and home visits.

The book lights up several areas that can contribute from one side to a better encounter with the patient and from the other side can foster the doctor’s resilience.

With assistance from passion, humanistic attitude, humor and creativity even the worst nemesis of the

patient-doctor encounter, the infamous computer, can be seen in a creative way as a mode to promote integrative psychosocial care.

The authors come from different disciplines: psychology, family medicine, psychotherapy and psychiatry, and the integration of these disciplines contribute to the book's holistic viewpoint. I believe this book can be helpful for specific sectors of doctors and health care

workers who have an interest and want to expand their knowledge in the biopsychosocial model.

The book is full of clinical examples and I myself enjoyed reading it and look forward to taking advantage of some of the concepts and methods in my clinical practice.

Assaf Shelef
Bat Yam

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