

Book Reviews

Z. Nicholas Zakov, M.D.,
Section Editor

Anorexia Nervosa: A Comprehensive Approach, edited by Meir Gross, M.D., Lexington, MA: The Collamore Press, 1982, 223 pp, \$22.95.

Meir Gross, M.D., head of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Cleveland Clinic, runs an active program for eating disorders. Dr. Gross has had training in pediatrics and psychiatry and is well known for his work on the use of hypnosis in patients with anorexia nervosa.

This book is the outcome of a conference on anorexia nervosa and eating disorders organized by the editor and sponsored by The Cleveland Clinic Educational Foundation. The 19 chapters and three appendices were contributed by various professionals, medical and nonmedical, who have worked with patients suffering from anorexia nervosa. Contributors include psychiatrists, pediatricians, surgeons, gastroenterologists, gynecologists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, nutritionists, dietitians, and lay people who were instrumental in founding the National Anorexic Aid Society and self-help support groups.

The book is clinically oriented and covers a broad range of subjects relating to anorexia nervosa. Dr. Gross and his collaborating authors present a comprehensive approach to anorexia nervosa, which includes the various ways in which this illness is presented to primary care family physicians, gastroenterologists, gynecologists, pediatricians, hematologists, cardiologists, endocrinologists, and psychiatrists.

Chapter ten, which assesses the nutritional status in anorexia nervosa, is particularly illuminating, since nutrition is a neglected subject in medical education. This chapter discusses immune competence and its evaluation in these patients, since many of them become susceptible to infectious diseases.

Chapters 12, 13, and 17 cover hospital treatment

and include indications for hospitalization, the uses of tube feeding and parenteral nutrition and its potential complications, the role of psychotropic medications and electroconvulsive therapy, and the role of a comprehensive milieu program. Many chapters are devoted to therapy, and it is emphasized that no one therapy is responsible for the "magic cure." Treatment has to be tailored to the needs of each patient and, in most cases, will include several concurrent modalities. Treatment modalities discussed include individual psychotherapy, family therapy, group therapy, drug therapy, and biofeedback.

A special chapter by Dr. Gross is devoted to hypnosis in the therapy of patients with anorexia nervosa. The book concludes with three appendices that provide practical information for patients and their families about the National Anorexic Aid Society, its origins, purposes, and the importance of self-help groups.

It was innovative of Dr. Gross to invite a lay person (P. Tilton), the founder of the National Anorexic Aid Society, to collaborate in this book. The third appendix includes a comprehensive list of professional resources around the U.S. Anorexia nervosa and bulimia have been covered frequently by the mass media, but many cases are still misdiagnosed and receive improper treatment. The mortality rate still runs between 15%–21%. This book is a valuable addition to the literature on anorexia nervosa. Professionals as well as patients and their families will find it informative, educational, and helpful.

MOSHE TOREM, M.D.
Chairman, Department of Psychiatry
Akron General Medical Center
400 Wabash Avenue
Akron, OH 44307