Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Psychological and Pharmacological Treatment
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Preface

Recent advances in behavioral and biological treatments have raised the hopes and expectations of patients and clinicians alike in regard to obsessive-compulsive disorder— one of the most disabling, crippling, and resistant conditions in psychiatry. In addition to their therapeutic efficacy, these new treatments have also opened new conceptual perspectives, thus complementing the traditional psychological theories of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Therefore, it is timely for these various conceptual frameworks and the treatment modalities they engender to be integrated and synthesized in the present volume. To this end, eminent scholars in their respective areas were invited to contribute to this book, which we hope will symbolize and—in some measure—actualize the spirit of collaboration required if we are to fully comprehend the complex nature of this disorder as well as to address existing therapeutic challenges.

In Chapter 1, Rachman sets the stage by providing an overview of the conceptual and therapeutic issues of obsessive-compulsive disorder. This is followed by an in-depth review of the behavioral interventions from which Foa
and colleagues successfully distill the specific therapeutic processes of exposure and response prevention. In the third chapter, Sifneos deals with the psychodynamic factors underlying obsessive-compulsive phenomena and details his innovative technique of brief, anxiety-provoking psychotherapy aimed specifically at the obsessional state. In the next chapter, Salzman, commenting on the psychological treatments of obsessive-compulsive disorder, emphasizes the necessity for effective symptom removal as well as the elucidation of the meaning that symptoms and their eventual relinquishment have for the patient. In the fifth chapter, Ananth reviews the pharmacological and psychosurgical interventions that pave the way for the biological investigations of obsessive-compulsive disorder. In the final chapter, we identify and discuss controversial aspects of the phenomenology, classification, and treatment of this disorder that ostensibly require further study.

Though the scholarly reviews of the literature should make this book relevant reading to any student of obsessive-compulsive disorder, the volume ought to have special appeal to psychiatrists and clinical psychologists in training. In reading these pages, we urge the reader to put aside orientational preferences and to approach each model as having something specific to offer. No one model is perfect, and no single treatment is completely effective. There is reason for optimism, although it must be tempered with the knowledge that our understanding of etiology still lags far behind advances made in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive phenomena.

We wish to thank the administration of Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic in Pittsburgh as this book is based, in part, on a symposium held there. We would also like to express our gratitude to the senior editor at Plenum, Eliot Werner, for his support during the project. Finally, we dedi-
cate this book to clinicians everywhere who, with open minds, recognize and apply the specific merits of behavioral, pharmacological, and dynamic therapies to the betterment of their obsessive-compulsive patients.

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