

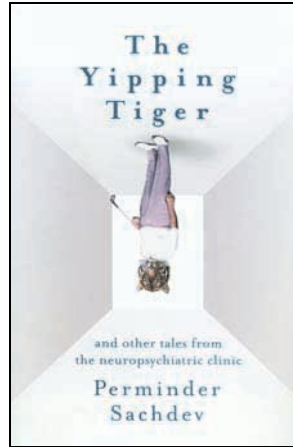
Ten (neuropsychiatric) tales, tall and true

The yipping tiger and other tales from the neuropsychiatric clinic. Perminder Sachdev. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009 (x + 289 pp, \$34.95). ISBN 978 1742 230849.

WITH THE OPENING PHRASE “The golf swing is an act of grace and supreme poise,” I felt I was about to read another Harvey Pennick (teaching golf pro) publication. Rather, this is a compilation of case studies the author gathered over 20 years.

Perminder Sachdev, Professor of Neuropsychiatry at the University of New South Wales and Director of the Neuropsychiatric Institute at Sydney’s Prince of Wales Hospital, considers 10 disorders and their underlying brain mechanisms. “The yipping tiger” examines golfer’s cramps, “Shaking hands with Dr Strangelove”, the alien hand syndrome, and “Swearing like a Spanish sailor”, coprolalia in Tourette syndrome. Other chapters cover brain enhancement, anorexia nervosa, frontal lobe dysfunction, major depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, phantom limb and mild cognitive impairment.

The inclusion of depression and obsessive compulsive disorder as topics was a little surprising — knowing the immense range of material referred to neuropsychiatrists I was expecting to find



other topics (such as Lewy body dementia, Huntington disease, stroke and depression, epilepsy and psychosis and demyelinating disease) selected for discussion of the overlapping neurological and psychological/psychiatric aspects of brain disease.

While well referenced with good notes accompanying each chapter, Sachdev might have shortened each chapter by a few pages in order to include other examples of neuropsychiatric disorders. Books of this format demand the difficult balancing of clinical vignettes with more detailed discussion of underlying systems and constructs (as demonstrated by Oliver Sacks and Harold Klawans). Some of Sachdev’s detours and digressions are distracting to the reader, particularly if this book is intended for the lay audience rather than the medical fraternity.

Yet this book is interesting and informative, with the audience lying midway between the interested layperson and the professional. It is very reasonably priced.

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