

Science and Pseudoscience in Clinical Psychology

edited by Scott O. Lilienfeld, Ph.D.; Steven Jay Lynn, Ph.D., A.B.P.P.;
and Jeffrey M. Lohr, Ph.D. Guilford Press, New York, N.Y., 2003,
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Practitioners of primary care, by virtue of its very nature, are often responsible for encouraging and/or arranging for patients with mental illness to seek psychological treatment. Those who provide primary care should therefore be familiar with the validity and efficacy of the treatment regimens that they recommend to their patients. *Science and Pseudoscience in Clinical Psychology* is the "first major volume devoted exclusively to distinguishing scientifically unsupported from scientifically supported practices in modern clinical psychology" (p. xix).

The text is divided into 5 sections: (1) Controversies in Assessment and Diagnosis, (2) General Controversies in Psychotherapy, (3) Controversies in the Treatment of Specific Adult Disorders, (4) Controversies in Specific Child Disorders, and (5) Controversies Regarding Self-Help and the Media. Each section is subdivided into chapters devoted to subjects such as autism, posttraumatic stress disorder, dissociative identity disorder, and antidepressant medications (including herbal treatments). For each condition, there is a description of commonly used treatments and a balanced review of the available scientific literature that supports or refutes each treatment method.

The authors have exposed widespread reliance upon techniques of diagnosis and treatment that have little or no scientific support. This text is an invaluable resource for anyone with an interest in mental illness. The clear and concise evidence-based chapters can easily be used as a road map for advising patients as to which types of therapies are best suited for their conditions and which ones are best avoided. Some of the material presented is disturbing; all of it is challenging. It is doubtful that many medical practitioners could read the entire book without having to reconsider the validity of at least one "sacred cow." The information is very current and copiously referenced. The authors are in no way "antipsychology"; rather, their common purpose is to encourage more careful scrutiny of psychological treatments based upon the scientific method. The editors and contributing authors are themselves psychologists representing a variety of clinical and academic backgrounds. This book rates as a "must have" for anyone who performs or recommends psychological evaluation and treatment and should be required reading for both medical students and graduate students in psychology.

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