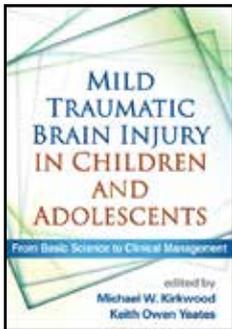




## BOOK REVIEWS

**Mild Traumatic Brain Injury in Children and Adolescents: From Basic Science to Clinical Management**

Michael W. Kirkwood and Keith Owen Yeates, eds. *The Guilford Press: New York, NY, 2012. 400 pages. \$75 (US), hardcover.*



As the title suggests, this is a comprehensive survey of clinical and research topics related to mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) in the pediatric population. This comprehensive volume summarizes both recent advances in this field as well as domains for future research.

This is a five-part survey edited by two neuropsychologists. Following introductory chapters, the main text outlines mTBI outcomes, evaluation methods, and clinical interventions, ending with specialized topics (including sport-related injuries and forensic evaluations). The editors bring together authors from a wide variety of disciplines, including psychology, pediatrics, radiology, neurosurgery, psychiatry, and sports medicine.

This book is well-organized and has a detailed academic approach. The mass of evidence presented throughout makes this book well-suited to answering specific questions of academic interest rather than providing practical tips for the average clinician. For example, one chapter contains information on commonly encountered post-concussion symptoms (headache, balance, visual symptoms) but includes limited treatment information.

A potential source of confusion for psychiatrists trained to rely on strict operational terms set out in the DSM-IV-TR (and now DSM-5), is the inconsistent definition of mTBI. The authors propose intracranial injury as a more important prognostic factor than mTBI itself. The authors acknowledge this lack of diagnostic clarity. The matters of whether mTBI is defined by loss of consciousness, or rather by any neurological symptoms, and how mTBI is defined in low-risk cases without a CT scan remain unclear upon review of

the various chapters of this book. Depending on the chapter, the answers to these questions vary.

There are useful clinical pearls at various points in the text. Two such examples include suggested referral options for particularly characteristic presentations and a review of decision-making rules for head CT scanning. Readers will likely appreciate and benefit from these guiding editorial statements for clinical management. However, these applied descriptions are embedded in the research-focused text in such a way as to make this book unwieldy to read from a psychiatrist's perspective.

Some guidance statements are fairly basic. For example, the reader is warned to be cautious in overcommitting or "undercommitting" to findings on tests, to be cognizant of a child's premorbid status, to be aware of the potential for psychometric errors, and to consider the influence of current stressors. These are all factors that would likely come to mind for any clinician who works with children.

Some lack of clarity was noted with some of the management suggestions. For example, with regard to when a clinician should encourage rest versus regular activity post-injury, after a presentation of the evidence for both rest in the acute period and the benefits of exercise as treatment, the authors conclude by stating that "clinicians must decide when to transition from activity restrictions and watchful waiting to more active treatment and rehabilitation."

Though it is of interest to review the history of progress in understanding mTBI and its manifestations, the book's narrow scope reduces its utility for many clinician-readers. The volume of management tips and approaches included in this book is limited. Overall, in terms of impact on practice, this work is likely best suited as a reference for the general child and adolescent psychiatrist. The editors have made an excellent effort in summarizing the current state of affairs in understanding mild traumatic brain injury in children and adolescents. The focus of the authors is weighted on basic science and assessment. This content is delivered in the form of a thorough review of current evidence.

**Eric Fung, MD**

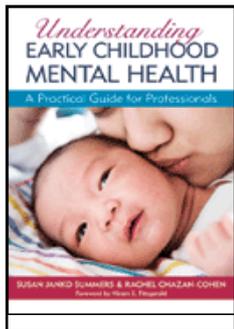
Resident in Psychiatry  
University of Calgary  
Calgary, Alberta

**Waqar Waheed, MD, FRCPC, DABPN**

University of Calgary  
Calgary, Alberta

## Understanding Early Childhood Mental Health – A Practical Guide for Professionals

*Susan Janko Summers and Rachel Chazan-Cohen. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.: Baltimore, Maryland, 2012. 275 pages. \$39.95 (US), softcover.*



This book is primarily geared towards early childhood education professionals, not health professionals. It starts with an introduction describing the lack of training in mental health for early childhood educators, and provides 11 practical steps about how to “support infant mental health in [...] programs” (page 7), such as:

“Educate teachers [...] about social and emotional development and caregiver-child relationships” (page 7);

“Allocate sufficient time and resources to qualified mental health staff or consultants” (page 8);

“Provide support to teachers [...] for compassion fatigue and secondary stress” (page 8).

It then goes on to describe each of these steps in the 14 chapters of the book. It is divided in two sections: the first section consists of the first seven chapters, and relates to infant mental health (development and relationships), while the second section deals with strategies to implement interventions in organizations to support infant mental health.

The first part of the book is useful to anyone working with young children and their families. It starts by giving general basic information about infant mental health, and then goes on to address the challenges brought up by young children who are aggressive or have emotional dysregulation. We find the chapter following this, on maternal depression, very important, given that educators might not realize their role and ability to intervene with the children themselves, and with the primary caregivers. An introduction to risk and resilience models, and a description of the effects of direct and indirect trauma follow. This section ends with tools to assess socio-emotional development and caregiver relationships, with descriptions of various questionnaires and curricula. We like that the first section of the book brings up the complexity of having to address mental health or abuse concerns with parents, and helps guide educators through

the emotional and cognitive process of communicating these concerns.

The second section of the book is more useful to those in a position of starting, managing, or assessing an early childhood program. It elaborates, among other things, on how to act on a systemic level to involve infant mental health specialists in the classrooms, how to take care of the emotional needs of staff members and engage in reflective supervision, and finally how to do program evaluation. The chapter on how to help parents seems quite relevant to me, given that educators are likely more trained to interact with children than with their parents, and having knowledge of the possible ways that they can help these families would likely empower them more to intervene in a positive way.

One of the strengths of this book includes the attention to including information that is evidence-based, as shown by the long list of references at the end of each chapter. The list includes books and journals from the fields of education, psychology, and medicine (child psychiatry, paediatrics). Statistics appear to be derived from reliable sources, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The two editors hold PhDs, as do the majority of the contributors, and there is a high level of scholarly content.

The book is easy to read, despite relying heavily on research articles. Chapters are brief and focused, with more detailed charts, tables and lists of resources for those who wish to know more about each topic or have a more visual summary of the information. The quotes from various early childhood professionals and parents make it even more enjoyable to read and help put the didactic material into context.

We did not always find useful the addition of some information in boxes instead of in the main body of the text, as it sometimes seems to disrupt the flow of thought. It may have made more sense to have some of the boxes at the end of the chapter or integrated in the body of the text.

Overall, this book does offer useful basic information about mental health of young children, which could be useful for health professionals who are not familiar with this particular subject. More importantly, I believe that this book is of great value to early childhood educators and programs trying to incorporate more mental health promotion and intervention in their work.

### **Marilyn Champagne, MDCM**

Resident in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
University of Ottawa  
Ottawa, Ontario

### **Dhiraj Aggarwal, MD, FRCPC**

University of Ottawa  
Ottawa, Ontario