Another Busy Year, Another Year to Be Mindful

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This month’s issue, guest edited by Asher B. Simon, MD, presents very useful discussions of several cases of adult attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

On the one hand, we know what a toll attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can take on successful day-to-day functioning; on the other hand, because one of the major documented treatments for ADHD involves stimulant medications, there is a reluctance to treat with these medications because of possible liability for abuse, particularly in patients with substance abuse histories and patients with comorbid bipolar disorder.

The cases we present this month specifically deal with these issues and with comorbidity, a very tough area for many clinicians. Another important aspect of these cases is the value of cognitive therapy and psychoeducation, either alone, or in combination with medications in the treatment of adult ADHD.

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COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES FOR PTSD

Over the coming year, Psychiatric Annals will be featuring a series of papers written by military-trained MDs on the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder using complementary and alternative medicine approaches. We look forward to these papers and what they might add to our own work.

DSM-5

After more than 5 years of effort, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) is finally completed and will be officially presented in May at the American Psychiatric Association’s Annual meeting in San Francisco. It is hoped that the changes made will help clinicians advance treatment efficacy, through a focus on important new aspects of the field now evident since DSM-IV.

It also is hoped that this DSM-5 will be a “living document,” with changes supported by new evidence being added incrementally, rather than waiting almost 20 years for an update. It will be interesting to see when we will have the DSM-5.1.

ANOTHER YEAR OF CONSCIOUSNESS

We don’t know how long we’ll be granted the gift of perceiving beauty in the world, of having empathy for those in pain, of enjoying the magnificence of nature, of feeling love. In that case, it makes sense...
to think about how we’ll spend our time over the next year.

Reading Shunryu Suzuki’s Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind, I learned that a good way to recapture youthful enthusiasm and joy is to start an activity I know nothing about. I have tried to add such activities to my life every year: fly-fishing, glider flying lessons, and singing in a High Holy Days choir despite having no background in Judaism, are a few of the exciting things I have learned about in recent years.

The activity that I have found most entrancing is writing my first novel, Living Forever. In response to a developmental editor’s critique, I am revising my book before I publish. In some ways, editing is like performing surgery on myself. But it’s enormously interesting and a full challenge for my consciousness.

In this new year, I will try to be more mindful. I think it’s the opposite of multi-tasking that I’ve been programmed to do for “success.”