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Optimum Nutrition for the Mind

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Patrick Holford is a productive fellow. Not only has he organized an impressive international conference on the subject of Optimum Nutrition and the Mind (see review, *The Osteopath*: March 2004) even harder, he has written a substantial, comprehensive account of current knowledge of the field.

Recent research is really beginning to uncover some of the science behind many long standing naturopathic beliefs that you can in fact 'feed' your brain to clear your thinking, sharpen your memory and smooth out your moods. Further than that there is growing evidence for the role of nutritional medicine in the treatment of a number of serious mental illnesses.

Holford is to be congratulated here for pulling together an impressive array of supporting evidence for his thesis on the vital role optimum nutrition plays for our mind. He outlines the five essential brain foods and flags up the worst 'brain-drainers' as well as outlining special devised eating plans and revealing the best dietary supplements and herbs to improve mental performance.

From Autism to Schizophrenia he explores the way many serious conditions have a biochemical base and the way in which nutrition can be a key factor in achieving a cure. There is a lot to chew on here. Covering almost 400 hundred pages, based on over 500 referenced research papers we explore both aspect of improving and protection your brain, increasing your IQ, boosting your memory, getting a good night's sleep as well as how optimal nutrition may play a powerful role in the treatment of serious mental illness such as depression, autism, anxiety and schizophrenia.

As we build an ever more complex world levels of reported serious mental illness appear to be growing. In Britain 1 in 20 people are diagnosed with depression and 1 in 40 with schizophrenia. Clearly it is a complex subject involving input from multiple fields' including psychology, sociology, psychiatry as well as biochemistry. But, as Professor Tylee of the Institute of Psychiatry says on the cover, "This is the breakthrough we have been waiting for."

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