

ent de situations particulières dans la vie familiale. Si leur lien avec le stress est faible, ces situations décrivent fort bien la multidimensionalité des situations stressogènes.

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Just when one thought that all the pertinent topics in the field had been studied, along comes this refreshing monograph on a subject matter which usually is dealt with in a very secondary manner. Given the familiarity we all have from our life experience of observing family members, classmates, acquaintances or perhaps ourselves, fingernail biting is unfortunately too often relegated to being an incidental human behaviour. Thus it has been perceived as without real clinical significance and not worthy of special study. Hadley quickly dispels this notion, pointing out that nail biting is frequently associated with a great deal of personal shame and embarrassment. It becomes a significant problem for many, not only resulting in physical discomfort, but also because it is viewed socially as an undesirable or offensive trait. There are many culturally acquired attitudes and opinions about fingernail biting to which most of us have been subjected, and which prejudice our perspective when we try to examine it objectively with a critical scientific method of approach.

In this book, Hadley takes us through a well condensed review of the published literature since the 1930's, beginning with a discussion of the emotional significance, and even the possible dental implications of nail biting. He demonstrates how medical classification systems have vacillated or actually failed to cite the behaviour. There is a general acceptance that at high levels of intensity and frequency, fingernail biting does constitute a behaviour disorder which deserves special attention and an active treatment intervention.

There is an exquisitely detailed description of the anatomy and growth characteristics of the fingernail which enables the applied practitioner to assess

the true dimensions of a presenting problem. For the would-be-researcher there is a review of measurement techniques which can be used for evaluative purposes. This comprehensive review of the literature gives a readily adoptable starting point for undertaking fingernail-biting research.

Hadley brings together a wide array of demographic data concerning nail biting under the headings of age and sex trends, personality characteristics, intelligence factors, situational factors, family variables, and the relationship between fingernail biting and other behaviour problems.

This is a well researched book which examines the myriad of contrasting theories of nail biting including claims that it is a normal, and hence clinically insignificant behaviour. A wide range of psychodynamic and behavioural theoretical models are discussed, though not always contrasted with each other. It is noted that this is a subject matter which received considerable attention in the earlier part of this century and then moved into relative obscurity until the 1970's when renewed interest was generated. Hadley has brought the subject into prominence again in this decade encouraging us to focus more serious attention in schools and clinical settings on this often misunderstood behaviour. This monograph endorses fingernail biting as a serious field of study and offers it as a rich pasture (no pun intended!) for research projects. The literature on the theory and research is of a very disparate nature but it has been drawn together in this book in a very comprehensible and readable manner. Perhaps one minor omission in the historical review of the literature is an examination of the Freudian theory of personality as it relates to fingernail biting. On occasions, the research works reported tended to be unsatisfactory in that they presented serious methodological problems that undermined the validity of the findings.

The final section of the book is devoted to the range of treatment methods, both practiced and researched, for the management of fingernail biting. Hadley carefully traces the necessary dimensions of successful treatment methods which tend to curb the behaviour. He emphasizes the importance of providing education for parents of nail-biters so that inappropriate punitive or destructive parental interventions, which may only intensify or protract the behaviour, are not attempted. A wide range of approaches are discussed but, as Hadley has found, there are not a great many rigorously researched therapies with sound methodologies which enable us to fully evaluate their efficacy. Herein lies the challenge to take up where others have left off, by subjecting these treatment methods to closer scrutiny through rigorous and well executed research methodology. Hadley has left us with many clues as to how to develop optimum methods of treatment.

As an experienced practicing clinician of many years, I found this book to be a breath of fresh air, exposing one to an area of human behaviour we all too often relegated to insignificance or unimportance. His treatment of the subject is delicate and sensitive, especially to the needs of the sufferer. It is a simple but important fact that we should be able to assess and determine the clinical significance of all cases of fingernail biting we encounter. This monograph does prepare us for those decisions. It is a practical book useful to clinicians in the applied setting, but also a primary reference for those who are willing to accept the challenge of a rewarding research field.