

Rachman S & Teasdale J. *Aversion therapy and behavior disorders: an analysis*. Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1969. 186 p.

This book reviews the theoretical basis, practical methods, and clinical status of aversion therapy. The intention of aversion therapy is to produce a conditioned aversive effect. The two main methods (emetic and electrical) are described, their applications reviewed, and their effects evaluated. Attention is drawn to the ethical problems involved, and the theoretical shortcomings of aversion therapy are analysed. [The *Science Citation Index*® (SCI®) and the *Social Sciences Citation Index*® (SSCI®) indicate that this book has been cited in over 195 publications since 1969.]

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Notwithstanding the distasteful aspects of aversion therapy, in which the therapist arranges for unwanted and undesirable behavior to be followed by an aversive event, J. Teasdale and I decided to review the large and growing liter-

ature on the subject in the hope of introducing some order and clarity. At the time, we expressed the hope that this comparatively crude and distasteful form of therapy would soon be superseded by more acceptable and more effective methods. To some extent, this hope has been fulfilled, and less unpleasant methods (such as covert sensitization) have been introduced. Unfortunately, these newer methods are not always as effective as the none-too-powerful originals, and comparatively few patients can be helped by them (see *The Effects of Psychological Therapy* for a recent review¹).

Aversion therapy is no longer in wide use and tends to be restricted to dealing with severely disabling problems involving excessive drinking, excessive eating, disturbing sexual deviations, and so on. The results can be clinically useful but tend to be unpredictable. There is a far keener, welcome sensitivity to the ethical constraints involved in using this form of therapy than was the case 16 years ago.

The book has been highly cited, I believe, because it has been a useful source of information and because it helped to introduce a more critical approach to the disorganized, scattered, and often uncritical literature on aversion therapy.

1. Rachman S J & Wilson G T. *The effects of psychological therapy*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980. 302 p.