

A novel contribution to existing research texts

'*Research methods in pharmacy practice*', by Felicity Smith. Pp xviii+286. Price £34.95. London: Pharmaceutical Press; 2002. ISBN 0 85369 481 8.

This book is a novel contribution to existing research texts, being devoted to research in pharmacy settings and the methods employed when evaluating the practice of pharmacy. Its original approach includes a dedication to research in pharmacy settings and a focus on the work of researchers, including challenges and resolutions. The book opens with an introduction that describes the place of pharmacy practice research in the wider health care setting and summarises the application of appropriate research methodologies in professional settings.

It is divided into nine chapters, each describing the application of particular research methods and techniques. It is wide ranging and comprehensive, covering survey design, sampling and responses; survey instruments, validity and reliability; theoretical perspectives and models in survey research; qualitative interviews; focus groups; observation methods; triangulation; and methods used to evaluate services, including objectives, designs and frameworks, methods and measures. The step-by-step approach through design, methods and analysis is logical and relevant to those new to research.

Dr Smith writes with the insight and expert knowledge gained from her experience in pharmacy practice research, yet the book is presented in an accessible manner. Each chapter is discrete, providing a full description of methods and approaches to different research issues and, as such, provides useful summaries for those new to research, as well as an aide-memoire for those with more experience who may use it as a reference source. I would recommend this book as an essential text for everyone interested in pharmacy practice research at whatever level.

Catherine Duggan

Reinforces importance of law and ethics

'*Practical exercises in pharmacy law and ethics*', 2nd edition, by Gordon E. Appelbe, Joy Wingfield and Lindsay M. Taylor. Pp xiv+236. Price £19.95. London: Pharmaceutical Press; 2002. ISBN 0 85369 522 9.

Pharmacy is practised through the roles and responsibilities of pharmacists. As the roles and responsibilities of pharmacists are necessarily shaped by both law and ethics, the practice of pharmacy has a distinct legal and ethical reality. The greatest strength of this book is its ability to re-emphasise the importance of law and ethics in prevailing models of pharmacy practice, which under-

line professional duties, responsibilities and relationships.

The structure of the book is to provide a series of problem-solving exercises at three levels — for undergraduate pharmacy students, preregistration trainees and practising pharmacists. Each exercise prompts a consideration of specific issues, gives a reference to the appropriate section of the companion text 'Pharmacy law and ethics', provides the relevant answer and explanation, and gives sources of additional relevant materials. The content of the exercises is well thought-out, relevant and sufficiently real to be of value, at each level. The content has been expanded to include aspects of pharmacy law and practice beyond the traditional analysis of a series of rules and regulations. A minor criticism of the structure is that the answers and explanations could have been divorced from the exercises themselves. For this reader, there was too great a temptation to glance at the response, which was often on the same page.

The final section on professional decision-making follows the accepted structure of ethical decision-making but expands that system into the resolution of problems with a distinct legal element. There is sometimes, but not always, a parallel between ethical and legal decision-making, but this remains, again, a minor criticism of what is a necessary part of this important book.

Kenneth Mullan

Provides excellent advice for researchers new to peer review

'*How to survive peer review*', by Elizabeth Wager, Fiona Godlee and Tom Jefferson. Pp v+62. Price £12.95. London: BMJ Books; 2002. ISBN 0 7279 1686 6.

This easy-to-read book describes the processes of peer review for obtaining research grants and publishing research papers or conference abstracts. It also contains chapters on informal review, such as a colleague commenting on written work, and professional peer review or appraisal, although these fit less comfortably into the overall theme. It aims to provide just

enough information to enable readers to survive and benefit from peer review and become a competent reviewer themselves.

It provides excellent advice for researchers, especially those new to peer review. If you have never published your work, following the step-by-step guidance in chapter four will at least ensure you have made appropriate efforts.

The guidance for those acting as reviewers is also well written. Authors, especially the inexperienced, need good quality reviews from which to learn, while editors need good reviewers. A read of chapter three may have some salutary lessons for anyone who has ever reviewed a paper.

Other publications and useful websites to further help potential authors are listed. The book also includes a valuable summary of methodological review checklists designed for reviewers, but which are a nice learning aid for budding researchers. Overall a valuable little book for PhD students in health-related disciplines.

Janet Kraska

A "must-have" text for pharmacists at all stages of their careers

'*Patient care in community practice: a handbook of non-medical healthcare*', 2nd edition, edited by Robin J. Harman. Pp xiv+283. Price £24.95. London: Pharmaceutical Press; 2002. ISBN 0 85369 450 8.

To adapt the well-known advertising phrase, this unique book reaches the parts of pharmacy practice that other textbooks do not: it is the only book published in the United Kingdom that deals with the many non-medical therapies for which community pharmacists supply products and advice, most of them as part of their basic National Health Service contract. These include stoma therapy, management of incontinence, trusses, support hosiery, oxygen therapy, wound management products, dietary products and inhalation therapy. Other services increasingly provided in patients' homes rather than in hospitals, and in which pharmacists are often involved are also covered, including enteral and parenteral nutrition and renal dialysis. Each chapter provides a full account of the therapy, giving the background to medical conditions, information about the products and equipment used, any problems associated with the condition or use of products, plus advice for pharmacists to pass on to patients.

This second edition, updates that originally published in 1989 and written entirely by Dr Harman. All chapters are now authored by specialists in the field but many, apart from updating, seem to be more or less identical to the text of the first edition. This does not matter, however, as the original material was difficult to improve upon.

This book is a "must have" for pharmacists at all stages in their careers and deserves to sit alongside the other essential texts on the community pharmacy bookshelf.

Alan Nathan

THIS WEEK'S REVIEWERS

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