PostScript

BOOK REVIEWS

Concepts of epidemiology: an integrated introduction to the ideas, theories, principles and methods of epidemiology

R Bhopal. (Pp 317; price not stated). Oxford University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-19-263155-1

The main focus of *Concepts of epidemiology* by Raj Bhopal is on giving readers the key concepts on which the practice of epidemiology is based. For this reason, it is deliberately simple to overcome the gap between the theoretical concepts of epidemiology, and the practical problems derived from the application of these concepts in the everyday epidemiological work.

The book is structured in 10 chapters and a section of "References and further reading" including for each chapter a list of suggested references for the readers who would like to go beyond the description given in the book. Within each chapter, and outlined by grey boxes, there are short sentences, which try to stimulate the reader on questions relating to real problems, or that give useful schemes emphasising various aspects of concern in the application of epidemiology. These grey boxes are extremely useful to the readers as they play the part, on a limited issue, of a self administered test. This book differs from other ones that have the same target in many ways. For instance, (a) the book's main concern is to give an extensive explanation of the epidemiological concepts: whereas in other books the emphasis is on the mathematical methods, in Bhopal's book the emphasis is on gaining understanding and not on calculation, except where this is essential to understand; (b) the practical applications of each concept are considered, and illustrated with examples drawn from up dated research and public health practice, including healthcare policy and planning; (c) the epidemiological idea of population is explicitly the foundation of the whole book, while in others this idea is implicit and often neglected.

For all these reasons this book, designed to be read as a whole, can be useful either as a basic text of epidemiology in graduate and postgraduate schools or as a refresher for epidemiologists, health service managers, or health policy makers

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Evaluating health promotion programs

T W Valente. (Pp 305; £37.50). Oxford University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-19-514176-8

The author, Thomas W Valente, is Associate Professor of Preventive Medicine at the University of Southern California School of Medicine. So the book is built on the author's experience in evaluating health communication projects and in teaching programme evaluation to graduate level students in public health.

This is a comprehensive guide to the framework, theories, and techniques used to evaluate health promotion programmes. It covers every aspect of the activities involved in conducting an evaluation, including formative, process, and summative research. The organisation of the book follows the chronological order of the occurrence of each activity during an evaluation project. So the chapters are divided into three sections. The first (Theory), chapters 1 to 5, covers health promotion frameworks and theories, formative research, and process evaluation methods. Part II (Methods), chapters 6 to 10, deals with study design, sample types, size and selection, construction of questionnaire and interview methods, data management, scale construction and statistical analysis. Part III (Results), chapters 11 to 14, deals with the calculation of programme effects and their interpretation and dissemination, including examples of statistical analysis used to assess programme outcomes. The final chapter discusses ethical issues and dissemination of findings.

Evaluating health promotion programs will help answer many questions that arise during a programme evaluation. So, this text provides a guide to the evaluation process. It is perfect for advanced undergraduate and graduate students in public health, health communication, health education, and health promotion. Ideal as a text for a programme evaluation course. Also, for researchers conducting health promotion programmes in the field as a guide to evaluating their programmes.

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The politics of sports development

B Houlihan, A White. (Pp 250; £19.99). Routledge, London, 2002. ISBN 0-415-27748-5 (hbk), 0-415-27749-3 (pbk).

This is a book that will attract anybody who has an interest in sports development, devel-

oping sport (the book makes clear the important differences between these two concepts), or even an interest in organisational and political history of sport in the UK in recent times (1960 onwards). In the latter context two of its summary tables of policy changes and environment would be worth the purchase price alone.

The first chapters deal in chronological order with the origins of sport development, its coming of age, welfare change, and Mr Major's changes for sporting glory and the impact of New Labour. The next chapter analyses sport development in four local authorities. These are Derbyshire County Council—a mixed area with significant poor areas and a partnership forum that demonstrates advantages and disadvantages; Herefordshire Council—an older more rural population with a use of trusts as a key aspect in their policies; Kent County Council—a vigorous sports development unit; and Coventry City Council—a largely industrial area using interesting partnerships. All four areas have different problems and strategies but currently partnerships and trusts seem to be the way forward.

The next chapter deals with four governing bodies of sport and their strategies and policies. There is much success such as Project Oarsome in rowing, rugby union, and hockey with a slight caveat on female development in the last two. Tennis has not been quite so successful.

The final chapter is entitled "Development of and/or through sport", which summarises and philosophises.

Underlying emotions while reading this book were of dismay at the political interference, frequent changes in policy, and the appalling propensity to re-organise nationally and locally but uplifted occasionally by the success stories mentioned.

This book is a "must read" for anyone who is interested in these fields.

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