

PostScript

BOOK REVIEWS

Global behavioral risk factor surveillance

Edited by D McQueen, P Puska. Kluwer Academics/Plenum, 2003, \$65.00, pp 255. ISBN 0-306-47777-7

This book is a godsend to those working in the area of monitoring and understanding changes overtime in chronic disease risk factors. It is a collection of 18 chapters authored by experts around the world and provides a comprehensive insight into establishing and maintaining the surveillance of behavioural risk factors both in developed and developing countries.

The examples of behavioural risk factor surveillance systems in a variety of international settings provide not only a glimpse into the diversity of issues but also suggest creative solutions to these challenges. Furthermore, what makes this book a practical public health resource are topics such as analysis, interpretation, comparison, and use of behavioural risk factor surveillance data. This book will serve as a guide for those new to chronic disease surveillance but there is plenty here for the seasoned public health professionals looking to hone their skills. I was pleased to see the reporting of the essence of the discussions that occurred at the four global meetings on risk factor surveillance attended by international community members beginning in 1999.

The authors have successfully shown that the global burden of disease is changing and chronic diseases are important health

problems in industrialised as well as developing countries. This shift calls for urgency and action to create an applied global surveillance system that would permit comparison of chronic disease risk factor trends, similarities, and experiences across populations. Surveillance of chronic disease risk factors is essential in planning and evaluating disease prevention and health programmes and policies.

Kaiser Mukhtar

Oxford textbook of public health, 4th ed

Edited by R Detels, J McEwen, R Beaglehole, H Tanaka. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp 1955.

The paperback edition of the *Oxford Textbook of Public Health* has in one volume the same contents as the hardback edition of 2002. The price is a clear advantage over the hardback edition, less than one third of the latter, making the book affordable for practitioners and students.

Compared with the hardback edition, there is nothing new in the contents of this edition. The volumes of the hardback edition are sections in this one volume edition. The first section presents the scope of public health (22 chapters in four parts), the second introduces the methods of public health (38 chapters in four parts), and the third details the practice of public health (41 chapters in four parts).

This book is an up to date text on the important topics of public health. It deals with emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases (although SARS is not featured as

the contents date from 2002), the challenge of globalisation, and how to solve social inequalities in health. Ethics is given the detail it deserves, in relation to human rights. Some complex and difficult issues are adequately discussed: how to prioritise public health problems, how to identify and carry out cost effective strategies, and the resolution of public health problems not from a disease oriented approach but from a more comprehensive point of view.

In summary, this textbook continues to be an excellent reference for public health practitioners, teachers, and students.

Miguel Delgado-Rodríguez

CORRECTIONS

doi: 10.1136/jech.2004.020651

Three editorial errors occurred in this paper by Dr R De Vogli and others (2005;59:158–62). In the third line of the legend to figure 1 it should read r (crude) = -0.607 [not 0.607]. In the fifth line of the legend to figure 1 it should read r (weighted by population size) = -0.658 [not 0.658]. In the fifth line of the legend to figure 2 it should read r (crude) = -0.415 [not 0.415].

doi: 10.1136/jech.2003.019547corr1

An authors' error occurred in this paper by Dr J Doyle and others (2005;59:193–7). Dr Kwok Cho Tang from the World Health Organisation, Geneva was omitted from the author list.

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