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## BOOK REVIEWS

**J.J. Fitzpatrick, K.S. Montgomery (Eds.), *Internet for Nursing Research: A Guide to Strategies, Skills and Resources*, Springer Publishing Company, New York, USA, 2004, ISBN 0826145450, Price \$34.95, p. 238**

The international requirement for evidence based health care and the availability of ever increasing technology, of which the internet is a key component, make the publication of this text timely. Although the target audience, from the title, is nurses, this book would be suitable for practitioners from any health care background, the concepts being research related and transferable.

The book is divided into three sections, accessing online information, conducting research online, and teaching research online, each further divided in chapters. This provides an easy framework for working with the text. Each chapter tends to be an overview and really there is scope for each section to be a text in itself. For the real beginner, there is not enough basic detail in the accessing information section, and far too much of the book would be too advanced. Many health care professionals would benefit from additional skills and tips on accessing information effectively and quickly, thereby making it feasible to check out information as part of clinical practice. There are some useful tips, such as how to structure searches, different databases, and alternative word use to optimise results. However, some examples would have illustrated the text, and providing practice opportunities for those less experienced. How to access theses, is more likely to be of use to those undertaking evidence based reviews, or research as opposed to the professional in clinical practice.

Chapters on using internet and related technology to facilitate current research activity, such as 'personal data assistants' (very advanced, small, but powerful web linked mobile computers), and research 'collaboratories' (virtual labs where ideas, information, data, resources, tools can all be shared by collaborating researchers regardless of location) seem to be the future for both researchers and health care professionals. Other chapters in the research section explore both the advances and limitations of particular methodologies; of which web-

based survey research is the most advanced. For the experienced researcher expanding into the internet world, the information might be perceived as too simplistic with not enough specific/advanced detail or information. The chapter on obtaining funding for internet research suggests funding is challenging in all research domains. Security, confidentiality, sampling/recruitment bias, response bias/repeats, and ethical issues are research issues, which are addressed within various chapters. These seem to pose similar challenges to research validity and reliability as any other research, with the Internet dimension providing and requiring subtly different options to minimise these difficulties.

The section 'teaching research online' is an exploration of how electronic learning can be facilitated. The educational suggestions range from undergraduate to doctoral level. For undergraduates the use of guided study, web based examples, resources for learning the research terminology and skills of critical appraisal are suggested. For post-graduates, who are usually clinicians also working in practice, the 'study at any time convenient to you' philosophy is achieved through electronic learning. Having experienced electronic learning, and facilitated some, there is still a lot to be said for face to face tutorials to support such learning, to start such study and at intervals to resolve difficulties, and motivate further development. So these chapters may provide tips for educationalists already moving in this direction.

The key weakness from a UK perspective is the degree to which this American publication relies predominately on American examples, cites resources that while readily understandable/available in America have little meaning in the UK. This I suspect reflects the current level of internet use within health care and research with the UK compared to the greater use in the USA. This issue is also evident within the appendices, which provide details of web resources. Accessing a few of these from the UK suggested that while some are available/some are not, some require subscriptions, some are so specific as to be of limited value, still others are clearly a very valuable information source.

Overall, I think this is a handy book to know about, and some of the resources and tips may be

useful, but its one for the library rather than your personal book shelf. Ironically I suspect that those most likely to want to know about internet information, research, or teaching are more likely to access the Internet and obtain this information from there rather than read this book. I wonder is there an electronic version available?

*Review Editors note.* It is interesting that this text is not easily available in the UK. It was not possible

to locate the book using a popular UK on line book purchasing web site nor the publishers European web site. USA based sites, however do offer this text.

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**C. Cox (Ed.), *Physical Assessment for Nurses*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2004. ISBN 1405105909, Price £19.99, p. 368**

This book is based on Turner and Blackwood's *Lecture Notes on Clinical Skills*, which were written for medical students. It is intended as a pocket book for nurses who are preparing for advanced practice roles. Written by Carol Cox, Professor of Nursing, Advanced Clinical Practice, City University – St. Bartholomew's School of Nursing and Midwifery, London, the author has extensive advanced practice experience, which she draws upon to provide useful insights and 'tips' for practice.

Many of the available pocket book texts on physical assessment are intended as aide memoir's only, and for this reason are partnered with a more detailed text. This publication has been designed for novices in history taking, and therefore goes into greater detail on the processes of history taking and physical examination. Although it has more detail in certain areas, this is balanced by less breadth in others and fewer illustrations.

The book begins with a brief description of advanced practice, its origin within nursing and current advanced practice roles. This overview was successful in setting the scene, and allows the reader to place themselves within the diversity of advanced practice roles.

The first chapter of the book iterates how the practitioner should approach the patient, the importance of phrasing questions, and what questions to ask. This section outlines some valuable principles, however, not in keeping with the rest of the text, the nurse and patient are referred to as 'she', which may be interpreted as sexist language. Whilst this is not explained by the author, it should not detract the readers' attention from the principles of history taking, which are carefully described in this section.

The general examination, using the medical model, is then described. This is later separated

into focused chapters on the cardiac, respiratory, abdominal, neurological, and musculoskeletal systems. Each of these sections is thorough, with all terms clearly defined, and abnormal findings aligned with differential diagnoses. What is lacking in these chapters is breadth and greater use of illustrations. For instance there is a limited description of assessing the genitourinary system, and even less on the ears, nose, and throat. For this reason, this publication would be an excellent text for novices in history taking but may be inadequate for those who are already practising.

The last third of the book is dedicated to specialist sections including the assessment of the child; mental health assessments; presenting cases and communication; interpreting ECG's and blood results; imaging techniques and common emergency treatments. These sections are not included in other similar texts, and may be useful when one is seeking immediate answers or reassurance in the clinical setting.

This publication is written in a friendly style and the author, metaphorically, holds the readers hand throughout, leading them on a journey from the fundamentals of the patient consultation, to listening to heart sounds, reading ECG's and making differential diagnoses.

Overall, this book will provide you with the basics of taking a history, and the physical examination of the major systems. I would recommend it specifically to nurses who are beginning their physical assessment training, because it has the necessary detail allowing one to grasp the fundamental concepts and terminology. For nurses who already have a grasp of history taking and physical assessment, there are other texts available, which have less dialogue, are greater in breadth, better illustrated and smaller in size.

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