

choices currently facing European member states.

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A. Grubb, M.J. Mehlman, editors.
Justice and health care: comparative perspectives.
Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1995. 360 pp. ISBN 0-471-95526-4

This volume grew out of a 1992 American and a 1993 British conference; its essays were first printed in *Health Matrix: Journal of Law-Medicine* (volumes 3 and 4, 1994 and 1995). The volume does not systematically focus on the distribution of health care services' problems which is normally seen in a 'justice and health care' title. And while 3 of its lengthiest essays (Barry Furrow on rescue-based legal obligations for providers to treat uninsured patients, Lawrence Gostin on the prospective influence of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on public health regulation and Vernellia Randall on legal strategies to improve health care services for African-Americans) treat problems in an almost exclusively US legal context, only 2 essays focus on a non-US context (one Canadian and one British) and only 2 are explicitly comparative.

Justice and Health Care's selections cover a wide range of topics and many of the authors' central claims are interesting and unusual. Nevertheless, few of the essays are original to this volume or its previous *Health Matrix* incarnation. James Blumstein's comprehensive defence of forward contracts for the sale of cadaveric organs for transplant is the best in the literature, but his essay here is only a minor revision of his 1992 *Transplant Proceedings* article. Gostin's ADA essay, similarly, is only an expansion of previous *Health Affairs* and *Milbank Quarterly* articles. Several other pieces are thin or do not add new points to the literature. Add these limitations to the miscellaneous character of the total collection and the justification for producing this volume seems weak.

Nonetheless, several essays are noteworthy. Furrow argues innovatively, on the basis of legal and social precedents in rescue law and emergency room services, for forcing health care provider institutions to care for indigent patients. Randall's analysis of inequities in health status and services for African-American

icans is careful and comprehensive and her proposal to use Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to eliminate racist practices in health care delivery and health care education, while problematic, is original. Carolyn Hughes Tuohy's essay is one of the most insightful, compact analyses of the Canadian system available; she argues for the central explanatory role of a power structure in which the state and physicians have accommodated each other by the latter trading a substantial part of their entrepreneurial, economic discretion for preservation of clinical autonomy.

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WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, editor.
Concern for Europe's tomorrow-health and the environment in the WHO European region. Stuttgart: Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 1995. 537 pp. ISBN 3-8047-1406-4

First of all, this is a massive undertaking. The book is the end result of an initiative by the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health. The centre has called upon 202 experts, 23 reviewers and WHO staff from different countries to assess the health problems related to environmental conditions in the heterogeneous group of countries that constitute Europe. The book covers all imaginable areas from traditional hygiene such as air and water pollution, to environmental health economics. A series of comprehensive chapters cover environmental health management, the economics of environment and health, the state of human health in different countries, air pollution, water supply and quality, wastewater and surface water, solid waste, contamination of food and drink and physical environmental agents such as radiation, accidents and noise. There is a small chapter on occupational health. This presentation of various problems is followed by strategy discussions, mainly in terms of recommendations.

It is an impressive and comprehensive volume with hundreds if not thousands of references. Its primary aim is to supply information to governments and agencies for future policies in the environment and health – a task for which the material is well suited.

For specialists on environmental issues, researchers and postgraduate students, the book has good and bad sides. Good in that as it provides a nice reference to subjects adjacent to those that one treats in everyday work. The cover of different subjects is very complete and there are many up to date and well formulated conclusions. The bad sides are that the information presented in the various chapters is rather superficial and blends in a way that seems inevitable in documents from international institutions. There is little about scientific problems, challenges or references to the ongoing debate. This lack of controversies makes it rather dull reading at times. Some examples: regarding noise in the environment there is hardly any mention of the vast work with social surveys that has been performed over the years in the UK, France, Sweden and the US, which has supplied us with the basis for current standards. In the chapter on air pollution, there is little information on the importance of particles less than 10 µm (PM 10) which has turned out to be critical in the understanding of the health effects of air pollution. Regarding indoor environments, the massive documentation on the relation between disease and dampness/ mould growth inside buildings is poorly referenced and discussed.

As a whole however, the good sides predominate. At the moment there is no other source of information on the health effects of the environment which comprises this richness and completeness of information. Politicians, policy makers and research fund suppliers will find more than enough evidence in the book to make them increase their so far inadequate actions to improve health in Europe. Evidently cross country efforts are needed in view of the much poorer situation in several countries of Europe and the need for increased international collaboration is well documented.

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I.K. Crombie, H.T.O Davies.
Research in health care: design, conduct and interpretation of health services research.
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Health services is not an easy field of research, since it brings together profes-

sionals with very diverse knowledge and experiences. Health practitioners, epidemiologists, operations researchers, economists and social scientists have all developed their own languages and refer to textbooks that are specific to their disciplines. There is a lack of textbooks devoted to the collaborative effort of these professionals that is required by the conduct of health service research. The evolution of the delivery of health services in recent years is paralleled by an increasing interest in the qualification and quantification of the benefits derived from health services. Many professionals at all levels, from clinical settings to health insurers or public health departments, turn to health services research to monitor the effect of local policies. Consequently, there is a real need for introductory textbooks in the field of health services research.

The main purpose of this book is to provide guidance to health care professionals into the planning, conduct and analysis of research projects devoted to health services. It is an easy to read introductory book that contains invaluable advice to anyone planning to conduct a first research project. Its first 2 chapters are devoted to the definition of health services research and are of interest not only to the future researcher, but also to clinicians, health care managers and politicians willing to understand how health services research can improve their decisions. The reader will then find very practical chapters devoted to the elaboration of the research question, to the main applications, strengths and weaknesses of frequent study designs and to the process of defining the data to be collected, up to the basic principles of data analysis and results diffusion.

While the book provides a very useful overview of the conduct of health services research projects, its principal limitation is its orientation on clinical epidemiology. Chapters on research into health care organization and planning are missing (the chapter dedicated to operations research is very thin), as well as a discussion of the feasibility of randomized clinical trials in the current practice of health services research. The emphasis on methodological approaches originating mostly from the field of epidemiology leads to the inclusion of a full chapter on case-control studies in spite of their infrequent use in health services research.

Crombie and Davies certainly succeeded in touching on virtually all the

critical steps of a research project that deserves particular attention. The main applications of study designs are illustrated by concrete examples and essential caveats are constantly brought to the readers' attention. While research designs are not discussed in depth, which might disappoint the reader looking for an advanced discussion on selected methodological topics, in many circumstances the authors provide an appropriate list of further reading. The book should be highly recommended to any student engaging into a public health training and should be read throughout rather than focusing on any specific chapter.

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G.M.M. Boonekamp, H.W. Vaandrager, M.A. Koelen, L. Kennedy-Haynes. Travelling through health promotion land: guidelines for developing and sustaining health promotion programmes, derived from a European experience.

Wageningen: Landbouwniversiteit Wageningen, 1995. 159 pp. ISBN 90-67-54-439-6

As mentioned in the subtitle this volume proposes guidelines for developing and sustaining health promotion programmes, derived from an European experience, the SUPER programme Nutrition Multi-City-Action-Plan (MCAAP).

Chapter 1 introduces the manual and the programme experience it is based on. In chapter 2 the key principles and concepts of modern health promotion (as defined in the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion) are explained, mainly avoid victim blaming and take into account the social environment. The importance of intersectoral collaboration and active community participation is stressed. The actual manual consists of 5 successive chapters which make very clear, with the help of graphs, the main phases of the process of developing a health promotion programme: what to do before you get started (chapter 3), how to prepare the runway (chapter 4), how to take off (chapter 5), how to stay in the air (chapter 6) and how to evaluate your programme once you have touched down so as to take off again

(chapter 7). Chapter 8 then proposes some tools and techniques for health promotion action research. In the appendices, a list of activities that have been performed in the various cities involved in the SUPER programme are given together with the list of participants. Each chapter is provided with literature references which are all appended at the end of the manual.

Reading this manual will help health promotion workers to avoid errors that have led to the failing of many programmes in the past. It is attractive and easy to read even for non-experts: each concept and strategy is well introduced and short case studies are proposed in boxes all over the book.

In terms of indicators, the stress is put on how to monitor participation in the programme. One may have expected some suggestions of the most useful indicators to monitor health status before and after the programme.

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