

experience in the research process as well as an insight into the needs of a small group of information service users. Integrated library and information services such as those provided at SGHMS are on a large scale, serving a diverse community and it is easy to lose touch with the needs of individual users.

Regular monitoring provides an opportunity for those involved to express opinions and voice concerns about the service they require. Studies such as this one, provide valuable information on which to base changes and improvements to services.

BOOK REVIEW

Roger Gomm and Celia Davies (editors) (2000)

Using evidence in health and social care. London, Sage

Publications in association with the Open University.

0761964959. £15.99.

This book is part of the core text for the Open University course K302 - *Critical practice in health care*, and is:

"... very much a practitioners book. It is a book for people who want to read research and apply it in practice ..." (p xi.)

Evidence based practice was formally proposed by Archie Cochrane in the early 1970s and has increasingly become a key principle of health

and social service work. However as the contributors to this book show, in a lot of cases, the neat randomised controlled trial format of a specific pharmaceutical intervention does not apply to complex health and social problems. This means that evidence of an effective intervention in one particular area of health and social care may be of little effectiveness in another.

The book addresses these problems by broadening out the concept of evidence and examining different aspects of the methods of obtaining the evidence. The first section covers the subject area: *evidence for practice* and considers topics such as:

- ways of knowing,
- making sense of surveys
- and using action research.

The second section considers: *putting research into practice* and includes examination of:

- agency information for better practice,
- would it work here?
- and should we afford it?

A case study approach is adopted within each chapter which helps for example to focus on the process of developing a scepticism about what

various research findings really mean. This approach also helps develop a feel for the strengths and weaknesses of various research methodologies. The references used in the compilation of each chapter seem current and relevant and each chapter concludes with its own bibliography.

The final section of the book is an extremely useful annotated appendix of books, journals, reports, databases and Internet addresses pertaining to evidence based practice.

To conclude this book is a very useful resource and from the point of view of information specialists, provides a useful way of informing both our own practice, and also by its exploration of the problems of applying evidence in one area to another allows us to assist others to find evidence relevant to their particular evidence based needs.

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