

### Health Care Research Done Right: A Journal Editor Shares Practical Tips and Techniques for High Quality and Efficiency

Fairman KA. Outskirts Press, Denver, Colorado, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4327-8606-9. Softcover, 356 pages. US\$49.95.

This book is written from the perspective of a journal editor, with the goal of offering practical information to researchers. Recognized by the American Medical Writers Association and the Indie Book Awards, *Health Care Research Done Right* consists of 11 chapters that take the reader from the beginning of the research process to the end. The target audience is broad, including journal editors, faculty members who teach research methods, and students and trainees

In terms of the book's strengths, the language used is easy to read, and the examples given help to illustrate the main points. The author obviously has a lot of experience doing research with large databases, as this type of study is used in many of the examples. The author also has substantial knowledge of statistical modelling and presents this information in a relatively easy-to-read format. In particular, the section on effect size and how it should be considered in determining a study's sample size will be useful to novice researchers. The sample study plan (presented in an appendix) gives the reader specific headings and considerations for starting a research project. The chapter on reporting is also quite user-friendly. One of the most difficult parts of writing a paper is drafting the discussion section; the chapter covering this topic does so very well and would be highly useful for research students. In the concluding chapter (entitled "Epilogue: Why Methods Matter"), the author provides an excellent example of why the choice and reporting of research methods are so vitally important, citing the original study that erroneously linked the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine with autism to illustrate why methods must be transparently reported and why peer review is essential in the publication process. The author

clearly describes how decisions about what is (and is not) reported can affect patients' lives and explains the common misconception whereby an association is confused with causality.

Despite these strengths, the book has a few problems related to formatting and organization. In particular, the chapters do not flow well. For example, the literature review chapter (chapter 4) comes well after the chapter on documentation (chapter 1). The book is somewhat difficult to use as a reference work, because the table of contents shows only the chapter titles; therefore, a reader who is looking for a specific topic must also check the index. In addition, the referencing is very casual. For example, for some statements referenced in the text, the reference list at the back of the chapter states "see examples" and lists many references. A more diligent structure for the references would have been useful, especially for new researchers, given that referencing the work is an important part of the research process. The tables are generally quite useful, yet they tend to be very wordy with small printing so that they will fit on the page. Moreover, the figures are not numbered or labelled, and it is therefore difficult to know where a paragraph of text ends and information about a figure begins.

This book provides a good overview of research methods, study management, and statistical considerations in research. It would be most useful to new researchers or those looking to expand their repertoire to include health services research. Overall, I believe this book is well written and succinct, and it would be a welcome addition to new researchers' bookshelves.

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