

Book reviews

Morgan, K. and Closs, S.J. 1999: *Sleep management in nursing practice*. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. 232 pp. £14.95 (PB). ISBN 0 443 05701 X.

Sleep is both a normal physiological function and the basis of many complaints to doctors and nurses in primary care. It is also poorly understood by most health professionals.

The authors of this book, both 'sleep researchers' and senior academics, apply their extensive understanding of the literature in a down-to-earth way that makes no assumptions about prior knowledge. They practise what they preach by proposing a hierarchy of management methods for sleep problems, starting with information, and then moving through advice, to behavioural, and finally cognitive methods. They have also structured the book so as to begin with information (physiology, epidemiology and pathology) and then to cover the various active management strategies, but in each chapter they also include a set of learning outcomes, cross-referenced to previous sections. There is a useful self-assessment quiz in Chapter 1 (which certainly showed this reviewer that he needed to read the rest of the book!). The chapter on 'special groups' (which includes infants and children) is brief, and does not address the very real problem of the persistent crying baby. A puzzling reference in Chapter 11 to 'behavioural approaches (see Chapter 11)' [*sic*] does not help. Health visitors seeking specific help with this problem will be disappointed.

'Evidence-based' has been the buzzword of the 1990s, and has become the butt of much criticism ('not the real world', 'can't apply it to my patients'). Morgan and Closs have drawn on a wide selection of the literature, both physiological and therapeutic, but unfortunately have not helped the reader to identify the *quality* of the research. Evidence-based practice depends first on a *systematic review* of the literature, and then on *critical appraisal* of its quality. Here we have clinical trials cited without any indication of how reliable they

are. There is no reference to two highly reliable systematic reviews, namely a Cochrane review of sleep training for first-time parents of infants (Renfrew and Lang, 1994), and a systematic review of nondrug management of sleep problems (Murtagh and Greenwood, 1995).

Nevertheless, this book will provide the generalist nurse or doctor with a valuable introduction to the causes and management of this very common set of clinical problems.

References

- Murtagh, D.R. and Greenwood, K.M.** 1995: Identifying effective psychological treatments for insomnia: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 63, 79–89.
- Renfrew, M.L. and Lang, S.** 1994: *Interventions for influencing sleep patterns in exclusively breastfed infants (Cochrane Review)*. In The Cochrane Library, Issue 2. Oxford; Update Software.

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McIntosh, J. ed. 1999: *Research issues in community nursing*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 210 pp. £13.99. ISBN 0 333 73504 8.

This very welcome and timely text for community nurses aims to focus on the development and conduct of research, and how research can be used effectively in nursing practice. It is an edited text in which chapter authors consider a whole range of community nursing research activity, which is clearly placed within the context of contemporary primary care policy and practice. A number of chapters include critical analysis of the methodological issues that have arisen from research in community nursing, and these analyses will be

helpful for nurses who are developing their critical appraisal skills.

Many chapters include the development of research in a particular field of community nursing, with two chapters placing district nursing and community mental health nursing within an historical context. Health visiting within the context of 'evidence-based practice' is analysed from a number of perspectives, including issues of accountability, policy and 'what counts as evidence', and a chapter about the assessment of vulnerability in families rigorously analyses the complexity of the terminology and concepts used in assessment.

The complex issues of research utilization and factors inhibiting the use of research in the community setting are debated in some depth, with the identification of ways in which research in community nursing can be developed. Useful examples of successful initiatives and approaches to the util-

ization of research are given in a number of the chapters.

This book will be of interest to all community nurses, particularly chapters related to their own field. However, nurses undertaking degrees in community health care nursing (and their lecturers) would be well advised to read the whole text, as it will give them an extremely useful critical overview of current research issues from a range of perspectives across community nursing settings. Those interested in research methods or historical and policy developments in primary care will also be interested in many aspects of the well-presented text.

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