

BOOK REVIEW

Ramon Shaban and Emma Brandenburg

Nursing Research: Methods, Critical Appraisal and Utilization 2nd Ed.

Schnieder, Z., Elliott, D., (Chief Editors)

LoBiondo-Wood, G., Beanland, C., & Haber, J. (Editors)

Mosby – Elsevier; 2004. 487 Pages.

ISBN: 0 7295 3665 3. RRP AUD \$78.10

Article 990137

Keywords: book review; critical appraisal; nursing research; research; research methods

Nursing research: Methods, Critical Appraisal and Utilisation is an Australian nursing research text designed to be relevant to both consumers and producers of research. Boasting contributions from 19 high profile nurse researchers and embodies the art and science of contemporary nursing research in Australia. It examines the role of research in nursing practice, and introduces students to the process and methods used to conduct nursing research and how to use nursing research in clinical practice

Structurally, the text is divided into three broad and logical sections. Section 1 explores importance of research in nursing practice and the history of nursing research. Initially addressing the question commonly asked by nursing students engaged in research scholarship — ‘Why are we studying this and how will it make me a better nurse?’ The text provides a comprehensive overview of research, approaches to research and the research process. Mapping out the general research process in a clear and articulated manner, section 1 provides an excellent guide for the novice nurse researcher, including design and development of research questions, conducting literature reviews, critical appraisal of existing research and developing a research proposal. The necessity for a nexus between research and practice, the importance of role of research in the nursing profession, and relevance to contemporary practice are clearly articulated.

Section 2 of the text provides an extensive coverage of arguably the dominant nursing research paradigm—qualitative research methods. After defining and characterising qualitative research, the text moves quickly into a comprehensive description of an array of qualitative methods. Godden and Forsyth examine key characteristics, methods and relevance of historical research is examined. Annells explores the purpose and influences on clinical practice of grounded theory research including the application of different

versions of grounded theory method. Tham discusses the relevance of ethnography in the study of cultures and sub-cultures in research. Phenomenology, a research paradigm that aims to develop an understanding of a phenomenon through specific human experience or the lived-experience is discussed in detail by O'Brien, who examines how phenomenological research questions are constructed and answered. Feminist and other critical approaches, incorporating feminist theory and how the central tenants of feminism relate to research practice, are explored by Jackson, Clare and Mannix. An overview of action research, and the importance of stakeholder involvement and influence in research findings, is provided by Street, which is followed by a chapter of collaborative evaluation research by Koch to complete the section. Practice areas, which lend themselves to qualitative research, are highlighted throughout this section. Broad understandings and deeper insights into how qualitative research accesses the human experience are well illustrated.

Section 3 of the text comprehensively demonstrates quantitative research methods. After initially discussing the aims and objectives of quantitative research, Schneider examines the approaches, outcomes and values of this research method. Elliot elaborates on quantitative data collection, listing both advantages and disadvantages of each method and provides tools for the critical evaluation of data collection methods in published research. Elliot and Hayes examine observational designs and methods describing the overall purpose and describe the strength and weaknesses of surveys, further identifying critiquing criteria to apply to observational research designs in research reports. Readers are then introduced to interventional designs and methods by Elliot who explains the suitability and application of this method. Elliot identifies how measurement errors can affect research outcomes and further discusses the concepts of reliability, validity, stability, equivalence and homogeneity. Descriptive data analysis is explained by Schneider who defines descriptive statistics and illustrates the purpose of these in research, further identifying the presentation of data in various forms such as tables, histograms, bar and pie charts. Schneider then illustrates how conclusions can be drawn from raw data using inferential analysis. Clinical practice areas suitable for quantitative research methods are emphasized through this section

An excellent feature of this text is that it provides research exemplars in the appendices of four different research studies that enable students to see research at work. This is coupled with a comprehensive glossary and reference list for students to engage with for further information.

The text is aesthetically pleasing with tables, illustrations and diagrams that reinforce critical topics and areas. The use of tables and diagrams is well balanced. Learning outcomes and key terms are clearly highlighted at the commencement of each chapter, allowing the student to plan their learning progression. At the conclusion of each chapter key points are highlighted, additional resources provided and critical thinking challenges presented encouraging the research student to apply and reinforce their new knowledge. Illustrations of the application of research in clinical practice are frequently used throughout the text to demonstrate clearly the importance of research.

Although, by its own admission, the text is ground in a nursing research framework, it is useful for students from other health disciplines, although they may have some difficulty in applying learning to their own context or field of work. The text is very suitable for novice paramedic researchers and other novice researchers in emergency primary health care. Although it is necessarily nursing-research focussed, it does not present a learning experience so engendered in nursing so as to be detrimental to students from allied health care areas.

The text is easy to read and offers a comprehensive introduction to the research process as relevant to the nursing profession. For the undergraduate nursing student this text is an asset providing guidance through the sometimes, tumultuous research process. It provides the nursing student with the necessary tools and methods to facilitate their novice research experiences and provide a very solid foundation for future nursing research.