

Book Reviews

Community Nursing: Promoting Canadians' Health

Miriam J. Stewart (ed.)

Toronto: W.B. Saunders, 1995. 813pp.

ISBN 0-9205-1313-1

Reviewed by Margaret Hooton

It is interesting to note that 10 years have passed since Stewart and her colleagues first published a book reflecting a "health" orientation for nursing in the community. That text underscored the truism that health and the accompanying behaviours are culturally and societally bound. In keeping with that assertion, it is important that Canada have a text examining the health of Canadians and the unique perspective of this society with respect to health promotion. Once again, the content of this edition reflects this country's values and beliefs concerning health.

The most striking feature of this edition is that the book has been completely re-written, with insightful contributions from experts in a variety of areas of nursing. Not only have the authors chosen to discuss the many different research and other innovative projects that have been implemented in the arena of health promotion, but they have linked those developments to the strong health values of the nursing profession. Beginning with the historical evolution of community nursing, the discussions lead to an exploration of primary health care as a social movement and examine that development within the context of Canada and from the perspective of its origins within the World Health Organization. The role of aggregates and communities, as part of health promotion, is presented, and here the authors focus on issues specific to the adolescent, older adult, and senior populations. These include multiculturalism, pregnancy, chronic illnesses, and accidents.

Throughout each of the papers there has been a concerted effort to focus on health-promotion behaviours, innovations in community development, and primary health-care principles of practice. There is a comprehensive survey of the developments undertaken by govern-

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ments, including changes in public policy, and discussions of how other groups have become involved in community-health initiatives. Moreover, there is a coherent presentation of how social support, coping, and socio-economic factors shape or act as determinants of health.

Given such an overview, the learner and practitioner of community nursing, whose focus is health promotion, will find this book of enormous benefit. Each of the contributors has used charts or graphs, where appropriate, to help the reader visualize relationships between the various ideas.

There are questions at the end of each section which, when answered, can add to the student's knowledge. The accompanying bibliography is extensive. With past influences highlighted and current orientations underscored, the learner is in a position to understand the context and determinants of health behaviours and health-promoting solutions.

Some of the authors in this book give considerable attention to the contributions of others, in which case the ideas of the current author take back stage. Thus there is more of an emphasis on the current state of affairs. A vision for the future, or an analysis of how the future may unfold, receives less attention. In general, this text will be most useful in undergraduate nursing programs and as a good reference for nurses linked to the current community health-care system.

Outcomes of Effective Management Practice

Kathleen Kelly (ed.) & Meridean Maas, Chair of Board

Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996. 265pp.

ISBN 0-8039-7175-3

Reviewed by Nancy E. Johnston

This is the eighth volume, in a series of nine, on the topic of nursing administration. Intended for nursing administrators and other providers responsible for clinical-care management and system management, this book is also a valuable resource for teachers and students in nursing administration programs.

The book is organized into three parts. Part I provides a conceptual framework for linking management interventions to health-care outcomes. The need for evaluation of management innovation is emphasized, although it is acknowledged that management evaluation is in its infancy and is fraught with complexities not encountered in rigorous clinical-outcome research. One chapter outlines the limitations of work to date and points out the need for standardized measurement. Also included in this section are nursing perspectives on one of the most publicized and utilized outcomes-research instruments – the MOS SF 36. Since nursing administrators will inevitably encounter this instrument in the course of carrying out their responsibilities, also provided is a valuable analysis of the usefulness of the instrument in determining outcomes of concern to nurses.

Part II deals with measuring and managing health-care outcomes. Examples of process and methods include case management, various tracking clinical practice guidelines, creative staff scheduling, clinical pathways, and outcome measurement.

Part III addresses practice-based evaluation of outcomes management by describing a variety of research projects throughout North America. Included are an Ontario-based study to expand practice roles in neonatology, a case-management project using clinical pathways in rehabilitation, a study comparing institutional and non-institutional approaches for managing the frail elderly, and resource use and clinical status in a sample of women having elective Caesarean section. The

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chapter addresses a very topical concern, the evaluation of a patient-care redesign project. Here, perspectives on factors influencing outcomes at every stage of evaluation are candidly shared.

The volume is well written and thoughtfully organized. It provides a broad cross-section of approaches that represent cutting-edge responses to current issues and emerging trends. This book is a "must read" for nurse-executives who are faced with the daily demand for creative solutions in the context of pressing patient needs, health-care advances, and resource constraints.