Introduction to Research
Elizabeth DePoy, PhD, MSW, OTR, Laura N. Gitlin, PhD, 1994
Mosby-Year Book, Inc., 11830 Westline Industrial Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146
329 pages, $29.95

One of the few research texts authored by those with occupational therapy expertise, this book offers a vast amount of information to the beginning researcher or to professionals interested in reviewing studies with a more critical eye.

The book proceeds in a logical fashion beginning with the philosophy of research. The how-to's of designing a study and collecting data are presented, and the final chapters deal with analysis and interpretation of data.

In Part I, the authors define research as a form of knowledge that is "logical, understandable, confirmable and useful" (p. 5). DePoy and Gitlin also point out that research provides the scientific evidence necessary to generate a professional body of knowledge.

The naturalistic approach to research, designed to uncover phenomena via inductive reasoning, is presented in a positive light. The reader becomes aware of the basic theoretical differences between this approach and the somewhat less controversial experimental approach and is given examples of each. The authors discuss that, although these approaches vary in theory, they may be combined to provide an integrated approach to research.

In Part II, the specifics of structuring research projects are addressed. Which framework (experimental, naturalistic, or a combination) is used depends on the question the researcher wants to answer. The authors also discuss the importance and mechanics of performing a thorough literature review and methods to categorize research designs. The remainder of Part II is devoted to further explanation of the naturalistic and experimental approaches. Examples to illustrate the continuum of designs in each of these approaches are given and several methods to combine these designs are proposed.

In Part III, DePoy and Gitlin delve into selection of appropriate populations and sample sizes. They talk about not only what population to include, but also what population to exclude to provide the most stable foundation for a research project. Data-gathering techniques are examined in depth for both the naturalistic and experimental designs, and several methods for performing statistical analysis are presented. Analysis techniques for naturalistic methodologies are also included.

Some basic tips for metamorphosing the information provided from data analysis into a written text that is clear and concise are outlined in the remaining chapters. The authors also make the point that information gleaned from research, no matter how relevant, is not of use to the profession unless it is disseminated to others.

In the last chapter, the authors share their personal research experiences. The reader is left with some perceptions of performing research in a practice-oriented profession.

The entry-level researcher, or the clinician wishing to upgrade his knowledge of what constitutes a strong study, will find this book of great interest. The authors have tackled a rather esoteric subject and tied it into a clinician's frame of reference.

This text was also written to be included in research curriculums. The student will find all of the necessary teaching information, as well as examples of the theories presented.

Some interesting features of this text include its logical organization. Each chapter contains a summary of the information presented so that the reader can review at a glance. Several of the chapters that present the steps necessary to carry out a study have mental exercises the reader can perform to test his knowledge.

A wonderful glossary, bibliography, and thorough index make this an appropriate reference book for the clinician. Theories, strategies, and methodologies are presented with tables and illustrations that are clear to those not familiar with basic research ideas.

One area that could be strengthened is the authors' use of clinical examples. The examples provided in the text are sometimes vague and difficult for the reader to relate to the tenets they are used to reinforce. In addition, many examples appear to be drawn from the authors' social work experience, rather than from their occupational therapy expertise.

The book does, however, contain several pertinent references to studies encompassing the occupational therapy range. Several of these studies were also done by the authors, lending further credence to their opinions.

For the most part, the authors present the information in an easily understandable style. The beginning of the text, with its explanations of the theory of research and the philosophies of several approaches, may be difficult reading for some. But overall, this text does what it was written to do: give the reader interested in research a thorough background in theory and methodology.

The authors seek to demystify the research process for those in the health and human services fields, and the reader is left with a sense that research is not just for those with specialized training, but that direct patient care providers also can possess the necessary skills and knowledge to make a significant contribution to their profession's body of knowledge.

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Substance Abuse and Physical Disability
Allen W. Heinemann, PhD (1993)
The Haworth Press, Inc, 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580
289 pages, $44.95 (hardcover), $32.95 (softcover)

One of the greatest challenges facing occupational therapists is working with patients who have dual diagnoses. Alcohol and drug abuse are contributing factors in traumatic and disabling injuries. This text brings together these topics to provide health care professionals with vital information necessary to understand the challenges and risks that substance abuse and chemical dependency pose for their patients. I would recommend this book to occupational therapists interested in gaining a better understanding of physical disability and substance abuse.

This resourceful text is well organized and communicates the context, issues, and problems of substance abuse. Information presented helps the reader understand causes, types, and prevalence of substance abuse as well as assessment, treatment, and prevention...