Microcomputers in Health Care Management: Strategies and Applications for the 1990s (2nd ed.)

Aspen Publishers, Inc., 1600 Research Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850.
256 pp., $44.95.

This book provides an overview of up-to-date microcomputing standards and investigates the current hardware and software markets, including a guide to standard software packages used in the health care field.

The authors focus on the significant features that computer users should be aware of and look for when making a purchase. This book would be helpful to any health care manager who is responsible for purchasing microcomputer resources, including those persons with little or no experience in this area. The book would also be helpful to those who already have a microcomputer but need an explanation as to its uses and capabilities.

The book contains eight chapters. Chapter 1 covers the use of microcomputers in health care management, including the way information is used, organized, communicated, and shared through computer networking. Chapter 2 examines microcomputer program development, cost justification, and strategies for the introduction of microcomputers to one’s environment. Chapters 3 and 4 provide a historical perspective of computers and their use in business and health care as well as an overview and explanation of the state of the art in microcomputer hardware and software. Unusual computer phenomena such as vaporware and computer viruses are also discussed. Chapter 5 gives an overview of electronic spreadsheets. Many examples of health care-related spreadsheets are discussed, including those used for analysis, simulation, and reporting. This chapter also includes information on how one can avoid some common pitfalls in designing and using spreadsheets. Chapter 6 covers word processing, desktop publishing, and graphics on a microcomputer, including the features, documentation, and support a user should expect in a good program. Chapter 7 examines database management systems and their benefits in health care management. Information on standard database program features, analysis of database needs, and the collection and organization of data into usable information is provided. Chapter 8 looks at microcomputer networks, including their development, how they work, and how they can be used to share information and resources.

This book is an excellent resource on microcomputers in health care management and would be a good addition to any library.

Diane Burnham, MS, OTR

Occupational Therapy Assistant: A Primer (rev. ed.)

297 pp., $27

This book, which is a primer, just as the title implies, is a well-covered introduction to the role and responsibilities of a certified occupational therapy assistant as well as to the field of occupational therapy. The book is well organized. Each chapter contains learning objectives, the body of the chapter, a summary section, review questions and answers, and additional learning activities.

This text could assist in the education of future occupational therapy personnel. A student entering an occupational therapy program may benefit from the simple explanation of his or her future role as an occupational therapy assistant.

As in most introductory texts of this sort, the opening section covers a definition of occupational therapy, current philosophies, and the history of the role of the occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant. This is followed by easy-to-read chapters on skills that occupational therapy assistants must learn and use during their professional careers, including the role of the occupational therapy assistant, treatment planning, the therapeutic use of self, and splinting techniques.

In the section entitled Patient Conditions, the author discusses various patient populations that the occupational therapy assistant may treat. The terminology and definition of diagnosis discussed in the chapters in this section would be easily understood by a student, particularly the chapters on spinal cord injuries and psychiatry, which are subjects that may otherwise be overwhelming to the novice.

Another section in this book examines health care trends. This section would be beneficial to practicing occupational therapists as well. The author discusses the changes in health care over the last decade, such as Medicare issues and the decreasing availability of funds. Medical and scientific improvements are also mentioned. A comprehensive explanation of diagnosis-related groups is provided, and technology and research ideas and issues complete the chapter.

In this revised edition, a section on neurodevelopmental techniques is included. The author gives a brief introduction to the terms associated with this mode of treatment. Additionally, a study guide was added that provides suggestions on study techniques, such as the use of mnemonics. At the end of this section is a list of questions taken from each chapter, and the answers are to be found in the text.

In summary, this book would lend itself to a person about to enter college who is considering a profession in occupational therapy, specifically as an occupational therapy assistant.

Mary T. McIntire, COTA/L

Independence Day: Designing Computer Solutions for Individuals With Disability

Peter Green and Alan J. Brightman, PhD (1990).
DLM Teaching Resources, One DLM Park, Allen, TX 75002.
135 pp., $17.95.

The process of adapting the computer for the unique needs of a person with a disability is the focus of this book. The authors explain in the introduction that this book does not provide the solution to a particular problem. Instead, the focus is on how one can learn to problem-solve, build a network, and find resources. This book is divided into an introduction, a chapter on computer basics, four chapters on designing computer solutions for four different disabilities, and a conclusion on applying...