

# BOOK REVIEWS

*Instruments for Clinical Nursing Research*  
Edited by Frank-Stromgorg, Marilyn. Norwalk:  
Appleton & Lange, 1988.

This book covers the instruments which can be used to study 25 common variables in nursing. Usually a brief theoretical definition of the concept is given, noting the components of the concept and association phenomena. The instruments which have been developed to measure the variable are discussed. The psychometric properties of each instrument are discussed, samples on which it has been used are described and strengths and weaknesses are identified.

The variables covered include those which describe health and functioning, such as:

- Quality of Life
- Social Support
- Coping
- Self-care Activities;

as well as those which deal with the assessment of clinical problems, such as:

- Pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dyspnea.

A limitation of the work is that the actual instruments are not given, and must be obtained from the references. The focus is also strongly on general nursing, for instance the functional assessment deals with physical impairment and not with psychiatric impairment. Nevertheless, I am sure that nurse researchers will find this a useful resource and it should be in every nursing library.

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*Research Awareness. A Programme For Nurses, Midwives And Health Visitors (1989)*  
13 separate modules prepared by various authors. Published by Distance Learning Centre, South Bank Polytechnic, Room ID35, Technopark, 90 London Road, London SE1 6LN, U.K.

These research modules, published as 13 distinct paper-back entities cost about R35 each for South Africans, therefore they are not cheap. Nevertheless, as teaching-aids, they are very useful. Modules complement each other, forming part of a whole programme, but each is also self-standing and may be used

individually. Each module covers a distinct area of research. For example, Module 1 approaches Nursing Research in Professional Development, Module 2 Sources of Nursing Knowledge, Module 4 Searching the Literature, Module 5 Identifying & Defining Questions for Research, Module 8 The Survey Perspective, Module 9 Experimental Perspective, Module 11 Using Research Findings and so on.

The series was piloted in the context of the English National Board Course No 995: An Introduction to the Understanding and Application of Research and has been prepared by an experienced academic course team. The modules have been prepared to encourage professional self-awareness, to extend knowledge about research and its application to nursing practice and to develop an exchange of ideas between researchers and practising nurses.

Essentially the modules have been developed for self-directed learning and as such, each is filled with different activities followed immediately by commentary which examines points raised by the activity; of great benefit, the centre of each module contains offprints of the article and book extracts which are referred to in the text at specific points in the programme.

The works have been carefully prepared and tested by both students and critical readers; language used is familiar and non-threatening for the novice researcher and one may warmly recommend these works as additions to nursing libraries.

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*African Birth: Childbirth in Cultural Transition (1990)*. Chalmers B. Riverclub: Berv. 140 pages paperback. approx. Retail price: R65-85

Beverley Chalmers' interest in childbirth and her research amongst the Pedi are well known to many South African midwives and her book on African Childbirth is a culmination of this experience.

This book makes for compelling reading and the text is enhanced by the unique illustrations of African artefacts. Professor Chalmers has

carefully interwoven her research findings with a comprehensive literature review, which gives a wealth of useful information. However, it is disappointing not to find a synopsis of the author's original research, perhaps in an annexure, which would have added depth to this publication.

The author initially describes African and Western views of health and illness before examining traditional birth in Southern African blacks. She then focuses on childbirth in transition, looking particularly at pregnancy, childbirth and infant feeding. She writes that African women delivering in Westernized health institutions "may be falling between two cultures" (p48) as many traditional beliefs and practices have been discarded with increasing urbanization but pregnant women are not well-informed regarding Western birthing practices including common obstetrical interventions.

She examines important issues such as African women's reluctance to disclose pregnancy early which may result in late antenatal attendance and also on the lack of provision in many institutions for social support in labour and the puerperium which is traditionally valued. Her clear exposition of these issues provide a framework for professional health care workers to critically examine and change their practice. The author provides a "framework for planning" (p.87) which is based on Maslow's (1962) hierarchy of needs approach and this will assist midwives to meet the needs of African women more appropriately throughout the process of childbirth, from pregnancy to the puerperium.

Professor Chalmers is the first to argue that generalization to all Africans is not possible, but there are certain important commonalities which she has identified and the issues she has raised should sensitise midwives and enhance their practice.

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