

Book reviews

Managing clinical processes in health services
Sorensen R, Iedema R
Churchill Livingstone Australia, 2008
ISBN: 9780729538251. xiv + 269 pages. RRP: \$60.00.

THIS AUSTRALIAN TEXT provides the reader with a framework to manage the clinical processes within health services. It will assist the reader in understanding the links between clinical work, managing clinical processes and the health system in which clinicians practice.

The text is divided into three main sections. The first section, *Setting the context*, covers content around the objectives and evidence of managing clinical processes, operations management and the politics of health care. In an increasingly complex and political health care landscape, the section dealing with the politics and health care workforce is both timely and entirely appropriate. The second section, *The operating environment*, explores concepts such as managing chronic illness, multidisciplinary team care and integrating performance. In the current Australian health care environment, the ability to work successfully in clinical teams is becoming increasingly important in terms of quality patient outcomes. The final section, *Accounting for outcomes*, considers quality, risk management, patient safety, policy and practice in Australian health care and involving communities in decision making. The authors have successfully handled these areas in sufficient detail without distracting the reader in the minutiae of risk management and safety.

Overall, the book is well researched, written and laid out. The text makes good use of case studies and supporting documents. Each chapter is relatively short and to the point. Appropriate use of figures, tables and diagrams helps the reader understand key clinical management concepts. A couple of the pleasing elements of the book are the inclusion of “reflective pauses” and sections on “implications for practice”. These two elements allow the manager and practitioner to consider their role, function and experience in managing clinical processes.

As stated in the preface (p. viii), this offering is “intended to provide clinicians, clinical managers and corporate managers with a practical guide to transforming health services by managing clinical processes”. Generally speaking, the text achieves what it sets out to provide — a clear and encompassing account of managing the sometimes complex task of leading multidisciplinary staff to deliver clinical care. The authors have successfully brought together theory and practice into one text that provides useful insights and reflective moments for both clinicians and managers.

Reviewer rating: ★★★★★

VLADS for Dummies
Queensland Health Clinical Practice Improvement Centre
Wiley Publishing Australia, 2008
ISBN: 978 0 7314 0829 0. xii + 136 pages. RRP: \$4.13.

THIS STRAIGHTFORWARD BOOK in the typical “Dummies” series style is an excellent resource for clinicians and health managers who want to understand the concept of VLADS — or Variable Life Adjusted Displays. The guide leads the reader through important concepts such as understanding what VLADS are for, why they exist and how VLADS are created. The book does a great job in helping the reader understand VLAD graphs and flags. Additionally, the important aspects of VLAD investigations including conducting an investigation, acting upon findings and reporting on outcomes are clearly outlined. The guide concludes with a useful section on VLAD clinical indicator definitions. Once again the “Dummies” series comes to the fore, with a book that is a good addition to the library of any clinician or manager wanting to get a handle on VLADS to improve patient care and statistical analyses.

Reviewer rating: ★★★★★

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