

Doing a Literature Review in Nursing, Health and Social Care

Michael Coughlan, Patricia Cronin and Frances Ryan
Sage, London (2013)
153 pp., A\$49.14
ISBN: 978144249611

The importance of good literature reviews in health and social sciences cannot be overestimated. Literature reviews can provide the solid 'shoulders of others' on which we can develop our understanding of best clinical practice and the directions of future research. *Doing a Literature Review in Nursing, Health and Social Care* is a really useful guide for anyone who needs to undertake such a review. It is comprehensive, well organised and enjoyably easy to read.

Written by three Assistant Professors in the School of Nursing at Trinity College, Dublin, the book explains what literature reviews are and, importantly, how literature reviews differ from essays. The book describes different key literature review types, including narrative, integrative, scoping, realist and systematic reviews, and explains when to use them. It offers an excellent contemporary guide to the process of reviewing health literature that incorporates critical appraisal, analysis, synthesis and writing up. Each aspect is accompanied by highly relevant recent examples and each chapter contains useful learning outcomes and key-point summaries. Important topics like systematic reviews,

critical appraisal and referencing and plagiarism are given their own chapter. Although students may want the instructions to appear before the explanatory and descriptive passages ('Just tell me what to do!'), generally readers will find Coughlan, Cronin and Ryan's handbook to be an engaging guide to each step in the literature review process. They provide a highly relevant contribution to the burgeoning practice of systematic reviews and beyond that doesn't overwhelm, yet gives a thoroughly practical overview with clear instructions.

Well referenced throughout, with useful web links, a minor improvement would be the inclusion of a 'Further Readings' section and list of useful web page addresses to accompany the references list and glossary. In summary, this is a practical, succinct guide; highly recommended.

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