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BOOK REVIEWS/RECENSION

Community-based Prevention: Programs That Work

R.C. Brownson, E.A. Baker, L.F. Novick
Gaithersburg, Maryland: Aspen Publishers,
Inc., 1999; xiv + 314 pp

Readers of this book are encouraged by the foreword and the first two chapters to consider the community as their sphere of influence and direction when conducting community-based prevention programs. Unfortunately, the following chapters failed to stay focussed upon this theme.

A community-based frame of reference for public health practice is identified as a philosophy rather than as the intervention target, which would be considered a grass-roots program. The authors recommend both qualitative and quantitative methods and data. With these principles introduced, the second part of the book included only one chapter out of five that explicitly mapped out qualitative methodologies. There was also a primary focus on topics of governmental policy being disseminated into local jurisdictions. In parts three to five, the authors hit their stride in providing case studies that are community-based (according to their definition) and describing them in enough detail that the reader can acquire practical tips on creating, evaluating, implementing and trouble-shooting their own community-based program.

The introductory chapters of each section of the book include interesting questions that could be used for personal reflection as well as for team-building exercises. With the pendulum of public health swinging towards community involvement and focus, this book provides a glimpse into the philosophy of practicing according

to a community-based framework and the pragmatic lessons learned in the process. Academics, practitioners and community members interested in approaching preventive health initiatives in a participatory way will be able to draw some valuable insights from this book. The title includes the word 'work': work is required not only for the authors to break out of the traditionally top-down and single-pronged approach to public health initiatives but also for the readers to take the lessons learned and apply them to their programs.

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Injury Prevention: An International Perspective

Epidemiology, Surveillance and Policy
P. Barrs, G. Smith, S. Baker, D. Mohan.
Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press,
Canada, 1998; xii + 375 pages, \$85.50.

The first author of this book is a Canadian with impeccable credentials in public health and injury prevention. This is evident in the manuscript – he and his colleagues from the US and India have explored broadly the issues, nature, scope and costs of injuries and have provided a basic and methodical approach to the challenge of preventing injury. They focus on all three phases – pre-event, event and post-event – and present a conceptual model that allows the reader to understand definitional, methodological and measurement issues. The authors recommend and illustrate the use of a method that analyzes health impact, circumstances and costs of injuries and also articulates in detail prevention and surveil-

lance methods that are effective and can be easily implemented without access to extensive computer technology.

This book has many graphs and statistics that illustrate the differences among countries and cultures in developing countries, with indigenous peoples and in industrialized nations. While two chapters are devoted to traffic injuries, other chapters deal with drowning, falls, and burns; poisoning, bites, occupation, skin wounds and eye injuries; and occupational injuries. Intentional injuries, such as homicide, suicide, war, and assault are also included. An interesting chapter on injuries related to disasters is provided. Each chapter defines the issue, and the authors suggest classification schema, recommend data sources, discuss determinants of the particular injury and present implications for prevention.

The book includes many relevant examples and recommends a systematic approach to injury prevention planning and programming, with practical suggestions for influencing healthy public policy. This book will be of interest to health practitioners who plan and evaluate injury prevention programs, to epidemiologists, public safety policy makers and to front-line community workers who are charged with implementing programs and explaining their importance to the public.

With injuries becoming the leading cause of death among many population groups, this book provides an excellent overview of the issues and challenges faced by public health practitioners as the threat of infectious disease wanes in comparison.

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