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Received: August 14, 2003

Accepted: February 13, 2004

Book Review

Public Health and Preventive Medicine in Canada, 5th Edition

Chandrakant P. Shah. Toronto, ON: Elsevier Saunders, 2003; \$54.95

The 5th edition of this popular text on public health in Canada builds on its predecessors, expanding on the already broad range of topics addressed in previous editions. It incorporates the latest information on population health status and federal/provincial/territorial reports related to health care reform. Dr. Shah summarizes and links information from numerous data sources. Reviewers of this edition represent a broad cross section of the Canadian public health intelligentsia.

The intended readers of this text include health professionals, health administrators, policy makers, students at all levels, and the general public. It will be most appreciated by those interested in learning about the Canadian health system and its history, whether they come from a research or lay perspective.

In 600 pages, Dr. Shah covers a diverse range of health topics. The text is organized into three parts: Health and Disease,

The Health of Canadians, and The Health Care System. Appendix A provides summary tables of the preventive manoeuvres recommended by the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care. Appendix B provides a set of educational objectives. There is a detailed Table of Contents and a well organized index. Both assist the reader in accessing needed information rapidly. Most chapters from previous editions have been substantially rewritten and updated.

Chapter 3 presents a conceptual framework of health indicators developed by Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information, and provides the definitions for many key health indicators. This chapter offers a nice link between Part I, which covers the key concepts and methodologies of public health and preventive medicine, and Part II, which could be seen as an application of these concepts and methodologies.

Part III provides an excellent overview of the origin, governing legislation and financing of the Canadian healthcare system. A new chapter on Quebec's health care system was written by Jean-Frederic Levesque and Pierre Bergeron. The final

chapter summarizes and compares key points from national documents, including those of Kirby and Romanow.

"Public Health and Preventive Medicine" is thoroughly researched, well organized, and very current. The breadth and depth of the information may prevent the book from being accessed by the general Canadian population, however they are necessary in order to maintain comprehensiveness and are reflective of the diversity of public health practice in Canada. Dr. Shah's text will continue to be used as an important resource by the next generation of Canadians working or interested in the public health system.

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(Book Reviews continued on page 277)