

BOOK REVIEW

Research Issues in Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine edited by Franco Franchignoni, pp. 249, 2010. ISBN: 978-88-7963-256-0. Maugeri Foundation Books, Pavia, Italy.

This book is Volume 19 in a series entitled *Advances in Rehabilitation* published by the Maugeri Foundation in Italy. According to the introduction the hard copy will be available for sale in bookshops, while the electronic one will be downloadable free-of-charge from the websites of the main European PRM bodies. Next year it will also be freely available for downloading from the ISPRM website. As such it provides a useful source of information and a readable overview of a number of topics pertaining to the practice of research in physical medicine and rehabilitation. Topics covered include ethics, case-mix and outcome measurement, experimental design, systematic review and meta-analysis, Rasch analysis, trials in Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine, qualitative research, and case reports. There are also some practical chapters providing useful tips for newcomers to rehabilitation research on giving a lecture or conference poster and internet resources.

In general the chapters are written in a clear, readable and accessible style. As with so many edited books there is a somewhat disjointed feel to the book which is very much a series of separate articles by different authors with minimal cross-referencing among them. In this regard it is perhaps more of a reference text to dip into rather than a book one might enjoy reading from cover to cover. It seems particularly well suited to newcomers to research in rehabilitation and experienced researchers will find much of the material familiar.

In this sense the title is perhaps slightly misleading, as most of the chapters feature a general introductory overview

of the topic, with little actual discussion of any controversial, complex or contentious issues. For example there is a detailed and helpful section on Rasch analysis but no mention of Classical Test Theory or even other popular approaches in Item Response Theory. Similarly the section on functional assessment, case-mix and outcome measurement by Carl Granger and colleagues, presents a thorough overview of the US system, but this model has already been extensively described in rehabilitation journals. It might have been more useful for an international audience, to have less detail on the well known US model, and a somewhat broader perspective of case-mix/database models from around the globe.

In summary this book provides a clear and readable introduction to a broad range of topics on the practice of research in rehabilitation. It will be most useful for budding researchers who want to learn the fundamentals from a text which uses rehabilitation examples – such as the chapter by Han and colleagues on the difficulties of doing randomized control trials in rehabilitation settings (and the alternatives). At the same time most seasoned researchers will also find something new and of interest here – such as the chapter on internet resources for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Certainly being freely available online it will fulfil a useful role.

*Lynne Turner-Stokes, MD, FRCP¹
and Richard Siegert, PhD²*

From the ¹Regional Rehabilitation Unit, Northwick Park Hospital, Harrow, Middlesex, and ²King's College London, Department of Palliative Care, Policy and Rehabilitation, Cicely Saunders Institute, London, United Kingdom