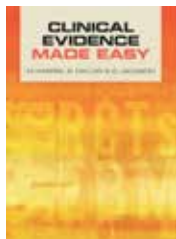


Book Reviews

CLINICAL EVIDENCE MADE EASY

M Harris, G Taylor, D Jackson, Publisher
Scion Publishing Limited 2014. ISBN-13:
978-1907904202. RRP: £18.50



This is a short book, 207 pages excluding the index, and is ideal for health professionals who wish to learn about or improve their skills in clinical evidence and critical appraisal.

The reader can use the book like a critical appraisal course manual working through each chapter consecutively.

Alternatively for the person with some knowledge of clinical evidence methodology and critical appraisal, perusal of individual chapters allows improvement in specific concepts as needed.

For individuals with a competent working knowledge of clinical evidence methodology and critical appraisal skills it is an excellent reference text.

The first section deals with understanding clinical evidence.

The second section deals with clinical evidence at work

The chapters are succinct. The text is simple and easy to follow.

The concepts are extremely well explained throughout.

In particular the second section explains how to integrate critical appraisal into daily practice using examples from the literature.

It allows the reader to better appraise medical literature including scientific papers, clinical guidelines, health economic guidelines and evidence from pharmaceutical companies.

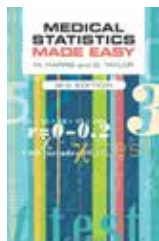
Appraisal tools to do this are conveniently incorporated into the latter chapters.

I really like this book. The title says it all- Clinical Evidence Made Easy

Dr Marie Staunton.

MEDICAL STATISTICS MADE EASY, 3RD EDITION.

M. Harris and G. Taylor.
Publisher: Scion Publishing Ltd 2014.
ISBN-13: 978-1907904035. RRP £16.50.



I really quite enjoyed this book – a lot of time and effort has gone into taking the fear out of statistics for the reader which makes it a pleasure to read.

A grading system of stars and “thumbs up” is used to denote how important and how technically difficult each topic is. Each topic in the book is then described using the same headers throughout:

How important is it?

How easy is it to understand?

When is used?

What does it mean?

Watch out for...

Worked example

This care and attention means it's possible just to dip into this book if you want to check some facts or you can read through it at a deeper level if you are planning out a research paper. The authors see their target audience as dividing into those who just want to be able to explain statistics in a viva situation, those who have to analyse a paper and those who are planning a research project. I would have to say that they have succeeded in their goal.

The book starts with simple statistics such as percentages, mean, median, mode and standard deviation. Then it works through confidence intervals, P values, t-tests and other parametric tests including chi-square tests right through to statistics which compare risk such as odds ratios, correlation, regression and survival statistics such as Kaplan-Meier plots and the Cox regression model.

The last section of the book then looks at all of these in terms of more complex real life examples from clinical papers reproduced with permission of the various journals – I thought this final section really helped with the understanding of difficult clinical trials.

Overall, I would thoroughly recommend this book for anyone needing to critically analyse a paper or think about the initial stages of a research project. It is not a complete textbook of statistics but more of a primer. It might sit on your bookshelf for a while gathering dust, but it will be there when you need it.

Dr John Purvis.