

Community-based Health Research: Issues and Methods

Daniel S. Blumenthal and Ralph J. DiClemente, editors

**Springer Publishing Company,
New York, New York
ISBN: 0-8261-2025-3
Pages: 240, Price: U.S.\$39.95**

So many, 11 of 14, contributors to this volume are from the Atlanta area that I expected this book to speak with a Southern drawl. That it does not attests to how much this metropolis, growing in kudzu-fashion, has changed. This element of profound change is also a major motif in the 10 chapters collected by the editors to promote community-based health research as a mechanism for addressing historic wrongs.

The book is aptly titled and subtitled. Former Surgeon General David Satcher writes in a concise but illuminating foreword, "Community-based research is where medicine, public health, and science meet." In the opening chapter, Daniel Blumenthal and Elleen Yancey herald the arrival of a "new paradigm" in which community members become full partners with "culturally competent" researchers. To them, community-based research is population centered, prevention focused, multidisciplinary, collaborative, enlightening, and empowering. Caswell Evans follows by adding "evidence-based" assessments, findings, and guidance to the mix. In chapter 3, Bill Jenkins, Camara Jones, and Blumenthal address some of the ethical issues related to community-based research by describing, analyzing, and drawing lessons from the Tuskegee syphilis study. Culturally and linguistically diverse voices from the community are heard in chapter 4.

Attention shifts from issues to methods in the last 6 chapters of the book. In textbook fashion, Nabih R. Asal and Laura A. Beebe distinguish observational studies from experimental designs in chapter 5 and remind the reader of the importance of person, place, and time in epidemiologic investigations. The strengths and weaknesses of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System are illustrated by Deborah Holtzman in chapter 6. Qualitative research methods are described in chapter 7 and applied to a case study of 45 African-American, female crack-cocaine users in chapter 8. Community intervention trials are introduced and a half dozen are reviewed in chapter 9. Then the book rather abruptly ends with a short chapter on cardiovascular risk-reduction community intervention trials.

Instructors looking for a graduate-level textbook may find this recent addition to the preventive medicine literature incomplete. It fails to link community-based research with theories of social and cultural change; the principles and practices of community mobilization; and the identification, development, implementation, and evaluation of culturally competent interventions. The editors have produced an adequate introduction to community-based research issues and methods, but a concluding section that serves to pull all the components together would put additional copies of this publication in college bookstores.

William W. Darrow*

*Florida International University, North Miami, Florida, USA

Address for correspondence: William W. Darrow, Robert R. Stempel School of Public Health, Florida International University, 3000 NE 151st St, TR-7, North Miami, Florida 33181-3600, USA; fax: 305-919-5673; email: darroww@fiu.edu

The Pneumococcus

Elaine I. Tuomanen, Timothy J. Mitchell, Donald A. Morrison, and Brian G. Spratt, editors

**Washington: American Society for Microbiology Press; 2004
ISBN: 1-55581-297-X
Pages: 466, Price: U.S.\$115.95**

Streptococcus pneumoniae, known as the pneumococcus, remains an important pathogen in spite of tremendous advances in medical care. Globally, as many as 1 million children die of pneumococcal infections each year, nearly all in developing countries. Pneumococcal disease is also common in children in industrialized countries, although in those settings nearly all such deaths occur in older adults or adults with chronic medical conditions. Given its place near the top of the list of killer bacteria, pneumococcus is a focus of numerous researchers around the world. A new book, *The Pneumococcus*, edited by Elaine Tuomanen et al., is the latest effort to summarize the state of research on the organism.

The book begins by providing a well-thought-out answer to a basic question—what is a pneumococcus?—and moves on to chapters on topics ranging from attachment and invasion of the respiratory tract to vaccine-induced immunity. The editors are leaders primarily in the areas of molecular biology and pathogenesis, and the focus of much of the book is on these topics, although issues such as treatment, carriage, disease in persons with immunodeficiencies, antimicrobial resistance, and epidemiology are also well covered. The relatively recent deciphering of several pneumococcal genomes has led to a new outburst of research activity, aspects of which are summarized in several of the chapters.