

BOOK REVIEWS

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Health Measurement Scales—A Practical Guide to Their Development and Use

D.L. Streiner and G.R. Norman. Published by Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 4th edition, 2008. ISBN 978-0-19-923188-1. Price: £29.95. 431 pp.

Streiner and Norman are academic researchers based at McMaster University, Ontario, Canada. They collaborate with other researchers across a wide range of medical issues, including epidemiology of mental illness and educational research such as evaluation of skills in resident doctor programmes and adherence to clinical guidelines. I have the first edition of this book, published in 1989, which was 175 pages in length including the index. This fourth edition has 431 pages indicating the advances in the subject since the first edition and the work of the authors in updating the book.

The text is well laid out with chapters covering basic concepts, devising the items, scaling responses, methods of administration and ethical considerations being easy to read. Other chapters cover areas such as bias, reliability, generalizability theory, validity and measuring change, and item response theory have more information with some formulae that require some understanding of statistics and epidemiology. Fortunately, the formulae are well paced in the text and are of value when examples are provided, which use the formulae. The book is supported by two appendices—further reading and where to find scales, which will be of use to those active in this field.

This is a book that can be used as a key reference book by those who wish to study qualitative change in health status by the use of scales. It should also be used by those who provide editorial support to journals that publish qualitative research and by those who interpret such results for evidence-based literature reviews. For occupational physicians who do not fall into these categories, this is a good text to read to update knowledge of this subject for continuous professional development but is likely to be held as a reference text for a departmental library especially for those with specialty registrars who would benefit from access to this book during training.

Rating

★★★ (Borrow from the library)

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