

## BOOK NOTES

Structured abstracts of information on newly published books, computer programs, selected Web sites, and other material are provided in this portion of Medical Writings.

**Study Design and Statistical Analysis: A Practical Guide for Clinicians**

Katz M. 200 pages. New York: Cambridge Univ Pr; 2006. \$36.00. ISBN 0521534070. Order at [www.cambridge.org/us](http://www.cambridge.org/us).

**Field of medicine:** Clinical research.

**Format:** Softcover book.

**Audience:** Clinicians or medical students with an interest in conducting observational research or clinical studies, and those who want to better understand research methods in medical literature.

**Purpose:** With its companion book, to “enable clinical researchers to design rigorous studies and analyse the data using both basic and advanced statistical techniques.”

**Content:** The book surveys clinical research from the formulation of a research question through the collection and analysis of data to the publication of results. Chapters are organized by the natural history of clinical research, from “Designing a Study” to “Publishing Research.” Chapters are divided into topics headed by questions that a clinical researcher might ask during the process. Early topics include “How do I choose a study design?”, advice on getting institutional review board approval, and “How do I manage my data?” Core sections are devoted to detailed statistical topics, such as “How do I determine the number of subjects needed for my study?” and “How is validity determined for predictive studies?” The book concludes with sections about interpreting results, publishing manuscripts, and even answers the question: “How do I deal with the media?”

**Highlights:** The book succeeds in providing a comprehensive overview of the nuts and bolts of clinical research in a concise, readable package. The author presents information in a style that is light and enjoyable to read, and he excels at explaining tedious topics with a generous amount of appropriate anecdotes.

**Limitations:** Although the book provides an overview of clinical research, details of important concepts are sometimes omitted. For example, considerable discussion of the randomization of participants to eliminate confounding excludes any mention of the role that intention-to-treat analysis plays in this method. This book may best be viewed as a conversational course in the terms and methods of clinical research. Understanding the concepts and methods that the book present may enable one to perform a basic study or collab-

orate in more complex, interdisciplinary clinical research, but fluency in clinical research methods will require something more.

**Related readings:** This book is a companion to Katz’s *Multivariable Analysis: A Practical Guide for Clinicians* (Cambridge Univ Pr, 1999). Other books on this topic include Gallin’s *Principles and Practice of Clinical Research* (Academic Pr, 2002) and Portney’s *Foundations of Clinical Research: Applications to Practice*, second edition (Prentice Hall, 2000). However, both books aim to serve more as reference texts than books one might read straight through.

**Reviewer:** Halcyon Skinner, PhD, MPH, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine Public Health, Madison, Wisconsin.

**Clinical Critical Care Medicine**

Albert RK, Slutsky A, Ranieri M, et al. 722 pages. Philadelphia: Mosby; 2006. \$139.00. ISBN 0323028446. Order at <http://us.elsevierhealth.com>.

**Field of medicine:** Critical care.

**Format:** Hardcover book with CD-ROM.

**Audience:** Physicians (critical care specialists, as well as any discipline, including physicians in training), nurses, respiratory therapists, or any other individuals who are interested in the pathophysiology and care of patients requiring intensive care unit management.

**Purpose:** To provide an overview of critical care medicine.

**Content:** A group of international authors gives an overview of the discipline of critical care medicine. The scope of clinical scenarios covered is broad and clinically appropriate. Sections include organ-specific issues, as well as basic biology and topics of general practice (for example, severity of illness, monitoring of patients, and end-of-life procedures).

**Highlights:** Each chapter begins with a list of key points and is complete with graphs, tables, and other graphics. The accompanying CD-ROM allows the reader to import these images for teaching purposes. Reading levels of the chapters range from simple to very complex.

**Limitations:** Critical care medicine involves many specialties, various types of patients, and limitless clinical interventions. Although the authors herald from around the world, their approaches to care are applicable to patients in North America. Regardless, with changing medical practices, readers should always scrutinize any drug, drug dosage, or suggested clinical plan of care.

**Related readings:** Any of several textbooks on critical care medicine.

**Reviewer:** Jeffrey S. Groeger, MD, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, New York.