

Brownson RC, Baker EA, Leet TL, Gillespie KN. **Evidence-based Public Health**. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2003.

Evidence-based Public Health provides an introduction to finding, understanding, and using evidence to protect and improve the health of communities. It is written by a group of teachers and researchers from the St. Louis University School of Public Health. The content is developed from the courses they teach, and as the authors say themselves in the preface, the format of the book closely reflects the structure and content of their course entitled “Evidence-Based Decision-Making in Public Health,” aimed at midlevel managers in state health agencies in the United States.

The book is divided into 9 chapters, which lead a reader through the various stages of evidence-based public health. It starts with a chapter on the need for evidence-based public health, and in subsequent chapters covers assessing the evidence, understanding and applying analytic tools, defining the question, searching the literature and organizing information, developing policy options and action plans, and evaluation. Each chapter provides a competent introduction to the relevant topic for someone with no or limited knowledge of evidence-based medicine or epidemiology.

Each chapter concludes with a list of suggested further reading and selected Web sites. I found the list of Web sites (which are primarily, but not exclusively, U.S. sites) particularly useful. Many were new to me and provide useful sources of information of which I was previously unaware.

In summary, *Evidence-based Public Health* provides a useful, clearly written introduction for nonspecialists interested in the need for, and practice of, evidence-based public health. It is based on course material developed and prepared by experienced U.S. public health teachers. A list of Web sites supporting the practice of evidence-based public health enhances the usefulness of the book for beginners, experienced researchers, and practitioners.

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Ratings:

Methods: ★★☆☆☆

Clinical usefulness: ★★☆☆☆

Evidence-based Public Health can be purchased online at www.oup.com/us for U.S. \$42.50.