

Funny. Informative. Engaging. These are not common descriptors of a research textbook but they certainly fit the second edition of *Making Sense of Research*. Instructors, students and practitioners who have used this text before will notice some significant changes to this edition which have increased the usability and readability of the book.

The early chapters continue to be a great initiation into the world of investigation and experimentation. Of particular note is the inclusion of a discussion of ethics in health care research that frames the later sections that present the various types of research designs and supports the overall purpose of conducting research. The section on quantitative versus qualitative methodology is enhanced by the discussion of the possibility of combining elements of both paradigms in order to best investigate the research question at hand.

Additional context is given to the field of scientific inquiry through the discussion of the evidence hierarchy, evidence circle, evidence house and evidence funnel. Each of these presents a different way of considering and ranking the best available research from the linear and strict evidence hierarchy to the flexible evidence circle. It becomes apparent that there is not one agreed upon method for determining which evidence is *best* or *most valuable*. However, the evidence funnel clearly articulates the purpose of this text.

The evidence funnel suggests that it is the role, and responsibility, of the practitioner to have the skills to be able to determine which research evidence is most valuable depending on the clinical or research question being asked. In order to be able to make this determination, one must have research literacy skills, which are generally understood to be those skills that enable a practitioner or researcher to find, understand, analyze and apply research evidence. This text begins to cultivate these skills as the reader works through the various chapters and applies the terminology and concepts to understanding the examples of research provided.

The chapter on statistics is an important addition as it allows a massage therapist to begin to understand the fundamentals of quantitative data analysis. Anecdotally, the thought of statistics scares massage therapists from picking up a research article and reading it. With good reason. Many, many books have been written on statistics and how to calculate them and very few of them are easy to read, let alone understand. This chapter does not seek to teach how to *do* statistics rather it provides basic information about statistics and their applications. Useful descriptions of commonly used statistics are included.

For massage therapists who are thinking about conducting research in their own practices, the chapter on case studies is a good place to start. While the main purpose of the chapter is not to describe how to carry out a case study, the information about what a case study is and the various types is quite informative. Readers are encouraged to use this as a starting point and to explore other approaches to case studies in addition to the information in this chapter. There are a number of examples of case studies to illustrate the various types which can be overwhelming at times.

The modifications and additions to the second edition of *Making Sense of Research* have increased the value of this text for instructors seeking a reference for their research concepts course and for practitioners who would like to understand the research they are reading to benefit their practice. The addition of cartoons at the beginning of each chapter brings some levity to an often dry subject. It is difficult for me to decide which is my favourite – the one that opens the statistics chapter where the businessman is looking for statistics to back up what it is he wants to say or the pie chart depicting the reasons why cows leave home? I'll leave you to check them out and decide for yourself.

