

THIRD  
EDITION

# Introducing Research and Evidence-Based Practice for Nursing and Healthcare Professionals

JEREMY JOLLEY

ROUTLEDGE

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# Introducing Research and Evidence-Based Practice for Nursing and Healthcare Professionals

Research can seem difficult to get to grips with. However, at the heart of this new edition is the view that research is essentially a simple activity, the principles of which can be readily understood by students new to the subject.

Each chapter guides the reader to uncover the 'mysteries' of research, exposing each aspect in turn, while demonstrating how research in healthcare is a practical activity, orientated directly to patient care. Fully updated to refer to the latest sources and studies, the third edition includes:

- a new chapter on systematic literature views;
- a new chapter on research ethics;
- a completely revised chapter on evidence-based practice which now focuses more tightly on the implementation of research and other forms of evidence.

This book is designed for all students of nursing and allied health professions at any level but who find themselves studying research for the first time. Research is illustrated through examples of activities familiar to students from their daily lives, which help build confidence in undertaking research and evidence-based practice.

**Jeremy Jolley** has taught research for many years, to nursing and healthcare students at all academic levels.



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# Introducing Research and Evidence-Based Practice for Nursing and Healthcare Professionals

Third Edition

Jeremy Jolley

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To Susan, Alice and Catherine



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# Preface

This book has been written for those who are new to research and who may struggle to understand what it is all about. Of course, there are already lots of books on research. There are big books, complicated books, books that try to summarise the whole subject of research. Many of these books are tedious, stuffy and often incomprehensible to those new to the subject. This book is different: it deals only with the important aspects of healthcare research, what practitioners need to know for research to begin to make real sense. This book isn't stuffy. Real research is exciting, it is imagining something new, it is dealing with real-life questions and finding answers, it is making healthcare better for real patients and real practitioners.

The subject that is research can sometimes look complex and perplexing, it can make people feel unintelligent and lost. This book aims to put that right, to show the reader that research can be understood, that research is at its core really simple and genuinely useful. All healthcare practitioners are clever people, and no one gets as far as reading a book like this without possessing real vigour and enthusiasm for the subject they have chosen to study and to practise. We should all believe in ourselves; healthcare practice is our responsibility, and we need to understand research and evidence-based practice to ensure that healthcare continues to grow and to develop.

Nurses and healthcare practitioners often don't get the opportunity to experience research, to work on a real research project. This lack of a research-practice element to our studies makes it hard for us to understand what research is all about. We all learn by seeing and doing, and a lack of research practice makes it hard for us to understand research.

Healthcare practice, including medicine, exists as a particularly broad range of disciplines and, as a result of this, employs almost every kind of research strategy that exists. Healthcare practice, from nursing to physiotherapy to medicine, employs both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. As such, we see the use of everything from surveys to experiments to approaches that seek one person's understanding of another at the deepest psychological and emotional level. The richness and diversity of research in healthcare practice leaves other occupational groups standing, but it also means that it is much more difficult for healthcare practitioners to get to grips with research. Let us be perfectly clear: there is a lot to healthcare research. It is sad that so very few existing texts try to help the learning practitioner through this maze. This book is different: it aims to provide just such guidance, to hold the reader's hand through the journey of discovery. The book does this, while consistently valuing the subject matter for its central importance to healthcare, for the intelligence of each and every practitioner and for the potential each of us carries within us to produce real advances in patient care.

The second edition enabled a welcome opportunity to add two chapters on qualitative research. Qualitative articles are usually written in accessible English, and the common use of the first person has the effect of making them seem friendly. The research itself often addresses the more human and emotive side of healthcare that many students find inter-

esting. However, anyone who has taken more than a glance at qualitative research will appreciate that it has a sting in its tail. For just beneath the surface, qualitative research gets seriously complex. Those who have turned their back on statistics and double-blind trials find themselves mixed up instead in nineteenth-century philosophy and wordy sociological constructs. The experience is like going for a walk on a pleasant summer's day only to become inexplicably entangled in a dense bramble bush, wondering how on earth one came to such a place.

Fear not, for in the spirit of the first edition, this text will lead the reader gently through the quagmire of convoluted terminology and constructs that is qualitative research. Just like quantitative research, its qualitative partner is actually really, really, simple. In fact, it is possible to write down how we undertake qualitative research (how it is done) on one side of a sheet of paper (I've done it, here). Of course, we shall look at qualitative research pragmatically, because healthcare practitioners are pragmatic people, interested in doing and understanding research, not for its own sake but rather to help us make things better for patients and clients.

This third edition updates the whole book, with a major update of the chapter on Evidence-Based Practice, which now has more focus on the implementation of research and other forms of evidence. The second edition mentioned research ethics briefly, but the third edition brings a whole chapter on research ethics. The research ethics chapter is still practical and down to earth. The literature review chapter has been updated and augmented by a new chapter on Systematic Literature Reviews. The changes in the third edition make this a much more comprehensive text. However, the central aim of the first edition still applies to every page of the third edition, that this should be a book for people new to research and perhaps confused by it. For those new to research and for those confused by research, this is the easy-to-understand book on research!