

BOOK REVIEW

Sexual Health: A Public Health Perspective

Kaye Wellings, Kirstin Mitchell, Martine Collumbien (eds). Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-0-335-24481-2. Price: £24.99. Pages: 256 (paperback)

Sexual Health: A Public Health Perspective is an excellent book containing important theoretical information pertaining to sexual health. It comprises 16 chapters that can be read individually, all referenced throughout. The book is divided into five sections: Conceptual and Theoretical Aspects of Sexual Health; Sexual Health Outcomes; Risk and Vulnerability; Interventions to Improve Sexual Health; and Measuring and Assessing Sexual Health Status.

In Conceptual and Theoretical Aspects of Sexual Health, theoretical perspectives are discussed, covering social construction, essentialist theories, bias and barriers within sexual health.

In the second section on Sexual Health Outcomes, the chapters look at sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancy, sexual violence and sexual function, pleasure and satisfaction. The third section on Risk and Vulnerability covers areas such as young people, men who have sex with men, sex workers, mobile populations, and structural influences on sexual health. The fourth section addresses Interventions to Improve Sexual Health and includes chapters on communication and language, promotion of sexual health, sex education: theory and practice, and sexual health services. The fifth section on Measuring and Assessing Sexual Health Status reviews researching sexual behaviour and evaluating sexual health interventions.

This book discusses in detail the theories behind sexual practices, discrimination and minority groups. I found it a thought-provoking book and particularly liked the chapter on communication and language that highlighted the pitfalls health professionals can fall into. The

chapters on sex workers and mobile populations address the problems these groups face, and consider why men and women may seek to sell or buy sex and the societal attitudes around this subject.

I would have liked to know more about the contributing authors, as while some are well-known clinicians in this subject area in the UK, others are not, and it is helpful to be aware of the authors' backgrounds and specialties. This is a clear and concise book that provides valuable insights into sexual health.

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