

## **Book review**

### **Cancer incidence, care and survival in the South of the Netherlands, 1955-1999**

This report produced by the Eindhoven Cancer Registry (IKZ) analyses cancer data over a period of 45 years. A novelty is the inclusion of a CD-rom. In the paper report detailed data are arranged by theme whereas data on the CD-rom are presented by site.

The paper version contains a variety of data: data on frequency (numbers of cases seen by a GP and annual number per hospital), incidence, mortality, stage distribution, relative and crude survival, prevalence data and data on co-morbidity at diagnosis for the South of the Netherlands.

This report also contains age-specific and age-adjusted figures of the LIKAR registry (a pathology-based cancer registry of the Belgian province of Limburg). Data from the Antwerp cancer registry (AKR) were used to compare stage distribution over the country boundaries.

An important part of the report is dedicated to the description of trends in incidence, mortality, relative survival and stage distribution.

Attention is also given to longterm relative survival (up to 15 years after diagnosis).

IKZ started to register co-morbidity at diagnosis from 1993 on and some of these figures are presented here.

Data on survival (1 and 5-year) from different European countries participating in the EURO CARE study are displayed.

The visual presentation of the data in a limited number of tables and many graphs and bar diagrams makes for pleasant reading.

A list of major references by theme is given at the end of the book.

The digital version is complementary to the paper document. On the CD-rom data are categorized by system and subcategorized by organ. A list of tables and graphs is presented for the different organs, which guarantees an easy access to detailed data. A short description or comment on the data as well as a detailed list of publications on the subject are available.

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**Medicine in Society. Behavioural Sciences for Medical Students.**  
**Edited by Christopher Dowrick. Oxford University Press, 2001.**  
**£ 14.99.**

“Medicine in Society, behavioural sciences for medical students” is written by 13 different authors, all experts in their field. The book contains chapters concerning all important aspects of “social medicine”. Nowadays, it is unthinkable that medical doctors would get their certificate as a professional without knowing anything about health economics, health care ethics, health psychology, epidemiology or medical sociology. That becomes clear in the preface of the book. A medical doctor operating in the 21st century western world, has to take into account the social structure in which he is working much more than half a century ago.

This book is a nice introduction in the behavioural sciences for medical students but also for students of dentistry, nursing and the allied health professions.

Of course, it is impossible to be complete but each chapter ends with “further reading”, so that those who want to read more on a certain topic, get a helping hand. The list of references is extensive. Moreover, it can also be of great help to have a look at the “useful websites”. An index makes it easy to find the page(s) the reader is looking for.

The publishers succeeded in making a book that is pleasant to read. There are plenty of examples. The choice of the key texts is superb. The Black report is a text every medical doctor should have read. Doll and Peto on UK doctors and smoking is still revealing after all those years, the Lalonde Report is essential if one is to understand something about health promotion. The insertion of a questionnaire such as the CAGE for identifying individuals with excessive alcohol consumption for instance, makes it possible for a physician to come into action from the first day he encounters a (potential) alcohol problem. It will be revealing to read that owners of at least one car have a death rate that is much lower (9.2/1,000) than the death rate of those who do not possess a car (13.0/1,000), thereby indicating that there is a strong relationship between socio-economic status and health. And we can give many more examples of how the authors take care not to go too far away from real life.

“Medicine in society” is conceived in such a way that it is possible to read each chapter separately, which makes the book an excellent reference work. The reading is facilitated by subtitles, boxes, graphs and case studies. I do hope that many medical students get into contact with “Medicine in society”. The result can only be better medical doctors.

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