

## Books & electronic media

### Reichman and Hershfield's tuberculosis: a comprehensive, international approach, third edition, parts A and B

Editor: Mario C Raviglione  
Publisher: Informa Healthcare USA, New York, 2006  
ISBN: 0-8493-9271-3; hardback, 1400 pages; price £ 170

From the publication of its first edition in 1993, *Reichman and Hershfield's tuberculosis: a comprehensive, international approach* was an unusual textbook. The first edition was not merely a state-of-the-art representation of research and science: it almost presaged, by its unusually comprehensive and international perspective, the upsurge in attention tuberculosis (TB) would receive from the early 1990s onwards.

In its own way, the book was part of that upsurge in attention. One of its original editors, Lee Reichman, coined the phrase "*the U-shaped curve of concern*" for TB. He meant that political will and funding may bring down the disease, but that resurgence will occur if political will and funding are withdrawn prematurely, emphasizing the long-term nature of the fight.

Right from the first edition, the book hasn't restricted itself to science and research, but has provided important information on TB diagnosis and treatment, described the breadth and complexity of the challenges that it presents to public health and captured the disease's global manifestations.

Under its new editor, Mario Raviglione, director of WHO's Stop TB Department (with Reichman and Hershfield's names incorporated into the title), the book has become even more comprehensive. No other books on tuberculosis offer the reader a chapter on the genomics of the tubercle bacillus almost next to one on the complexities of the control of the disease in prisons.

Similarly, a chapter on the elimination of the disease in the industrialized world is next to one on the challenges of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in eastern Europe and TB-HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. Such diverse subjects as the economic and financial aspects of global TB control and surgical treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis also are discussed.

Raviglione prefaces the book by stating his intention to cover "what needs to be integrated in practice through effective collaboration between research scientists, physicians, public-health officials, epidemiologists, and policy-makers". Executive editor Claude Lenfant introduces the book as a veritable "road map" for the implementation of the Global Plan to Stop TB, 2006–2015. I concur with these statements and hope that those who read the book will agree that it more than succeeds in these endeavours.

The third edition is an impressive multi-authored, peer-reviewed treatise published in two parts, consisting of 50 chapters loosely divided into six sections. For a multi-authored book its contents are surprisingly coherent, and in no way monotonous or repetitive. An additional strength is that it stimulates the reader to look beyond usual approaches for fresh insights and experiences in other chapters.

These features make the book a must-have for those working in tuberculosis control, be it in the industrialized world or in national programmes in Asia, Africa or Latin America. The breadth of its presentation, also make it a valuable resource for health officials who want current information on public health practice. But all readers interested in tuberculosis will be pleasantly surprised and informed by the insights and experiences presented. Raviglione is to be congratulated on this achievement. ■

Jaap F Broekmans<sup>a</sup>

### La recherche bibliographique en médecine et santé publique : guide d'accès

Author : Évelyne Mouillet  
Publisher : Elsevier SAS France : Paris ; 2006  
ISBN 2-84299-684-4; softcover 158 pages; price € 25

I recently read a novel set in an American college in which the author made numerous references to the main characters "googling" for information or having "googled" for all the research on their latest assignment. With the web so readily available, one might raise the question of why a book aimed at medical and public health researchers on *recherche bibliographique* (bibliographic searching) is needed, and one in French at that? Now that students and researchers have Google, or better yet the recently released beta version of Google Scholar, to find all the public health information on the web, why would anyone need something as old-fashioned as a book on bibliographic searching? Just enter a few keywords into any search engine and you have an unlimited amount of information at your fingertips (*même en français*).

I would argue the need is probably greater now than ever before for a book on organized systematic searching. While huge depositories of information are readily available through a basic computer search, it is not always the best or most complete information. The temptation is to take what is available with just a few clicks on your mouse versus a visit to a library for a book or a journal article, or doing an in-depth and informed search. Researchers in the area of medicine and public health, however, need to be able to locate the most up-to-date, relevant and evidence-based information possible. To obtain this information requires a systematic methodology for attacking the huge amount of health literature and assuring that all the

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major and important sources are queried in order to obtain the best information

Évelyn Mouillet has written a simple and well-laid-out guide for searching medical and health literature in a straightforward manner. The book begins with a discussion of how to search the basic sources. While basic searching need not be complex, it does require the kind of systematic approach which Mouillet presents in this book. She progresses through the major French-language health resources and then covers international sources (almost exclusively English). Important medical databases such as PubMed are covered with a clear explication of the differences between MEDLINE and PubMed. Also covered are bibliographic management software with emphasis on EndNote. The guide is made even more user-friendly by its inclusion of many illustrations and visual guides that mimic the computer screen during a search.

Is there truly a need for guide such as this in French? Having covered the A to Z language spectrum, where I conducted library training sessions for an Albanian-speaking-only audience via a French interpreter, and having used Vietnamese versions of WHO publications during a library presentation, I welcome any

documentation to assist in teaching researchers how to conduct in-depth searching. While the majority of the resources may be in English or use an English interface, it is beneficial for non-Anglophones to have access tools in their maternal language. Basic concepts of Boolean searching are better learnt in one's most conversant language, and my personal observations over ten years of teaching reinforce this belief.

A couple of changes would improve further editions. A stronger chapter devoted to defining the research question would make the book more useful to medical and public health researchers. As a librarian, my most important contacts with researchers are spent defining and probing their research questions, a step which involves breaking the question down into its various components. This vital step helps to determine which resources will be used and the breadth of resources to be searched. An overly broad question can lead to the frustrating situation of bringing up literally tens of thousands of hits. Refining the question allows for a more manageable number of articles, perhaps including the article that has already summarized and evaluated the best information from all those other articles.

I also noticed a definite preference for resources located within France. This ignores the rich resources of Francophone research outside of France, including Belgium, Canada, Switzerland and Francophone Africa, all of which offer relevant, high-quality research. Africa Index Medicus (AIM), for example, is a bibliographic database that indexes many Francophone African journals and reports, often with links to the articles' full text. Sole reliance on the French databases, even with supplementation from PubMed and Embase, almost ensures that researchers will miss relevant research, because research from developing countries may not be indexed by the major databases or there can be significant delays from when the research is published until it appears in the major databases. Évelyne Mouillet's book is, however, one of the better books to guide readers in searching for medical and health information that I have read. Hopefully the publisher will come out with a translation, as not only is it an excellent guide to searching, but it would also be useful to have an English version to encourage researchers to explore valuable French-language resources. ■

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