

## Action research in health

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This book would be of particular interest to healthcare clinicians and educators who are interested in conducting an action research study. The book utilises numerous examples of action research in health settings or situations that will help the reader to better understand the action research process. However, the book may also be of interest and beneficial to any person participating in action research even though the book focuses on action research in health. The healthcare focus is on medical health settings rather than dental health settings, but it can be easily adapted for environments involving dental and dental hygiene educators and clinicians.

The book is organised into nine chapters: chapters one through seven explain action research as a research method; chapter eight presents case studies from action research in health; and chapter nine lists numerous on-line resources. The on-line resources are organised into sections such that the reader can easily choose an area most relevant to their own interest or practice and seek the additional information pertaining to their interest. A very brief summary is provided at the end of each chapter, and figures or diagrams are added where appropriate to enhance the written text explanations.

Chapter one situates action research as an appropriate research methodology for the health professions and provides five varied examples of potential applications for action research. Chapter two presents the discussion and differentiation between the two dominant paradigms associated with quantitative and qualitative research. These two paradigms are briefly but adequately discussed, so the reader is able to better understand the context of how action research is situated as a qualitative research method. The chapter provides the reader with a 'working knowledge' of

the distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research. The distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is important to understand prior to reading the following chapters that explain the process of completing an action research project.

Chapters three to seven go through the action research process, from initiating the study, gathering data, analysing the data, representing the data, and implementing the 'action'. Chapter four, gathering data, outlines data collection, providing a brief overview of the various methods for gathering data during an action research project. Key points of each method are highlighted such that a researcher could follow the necessary steps for the specific method. However, the researcher may want to seek details of the research methods from other research methods texts or articles after choosing the data collection methods for the project. Other pertinent sources would provide more details about the specific data collection methods.

Each chapter includes highlighted/shaded boxes of personal anecdotes from the authors' experiences, in particular action research projects. The chapter of case studies illuminates the 'action' process of action research, which is a defining factor that differentiates action research from other research methods. These case studies also provide an overview of action research projects that enhances the readers' understanding of action research as a research method.

References and an index of terms follow the chapters at the end of the book. The text of the book draws on the writings of the key writers in action research, in addition to numerous other sources.

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