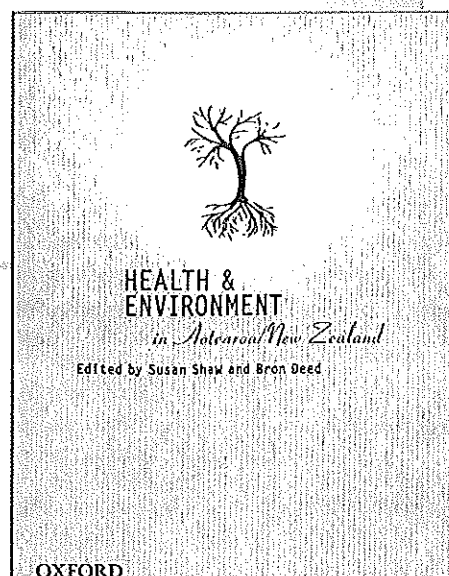


Book Review

Health and Environment in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Health and Environment in Aotearoa New Zealand brings together different perspectives on the factors that shape health and health-care systems in Aotearoa New Zealand¹. Even though the focus is on Aotearoa New Zealand, the book is also applicable to students studying in other countries, including Australia. What is so unique about this book is its format. Each chapter is organised along the same lines – chapter overview, key terms, case studies, lenses and critical questions, summaries, websites and glossary. The lenses and critical questions are centred around culture, society, gender, politics, morality and the media. The editors aim was to engage with current issues and explore them from a wide range of critical perspectives.

The shared structure of each chapter makes it a really accessible and readable text – one that you can read easily in its entirety or in sections of particular interest to you. For oral health therapy and dental hygiene students, there are lots of chapters that are relevant. These include a very good introduction to critical thinking, society and health and experiences of wellbeing in chapters 1-3. Chapter 4 looks at global environmental issues whilst chapters 5, 7, 8, 9 and 12 look specifically to Aotearoa New Zealand in terms of health and disability issues, politics and health, culture, health and wellbeing, lifestyle and wellbeing and the Treaty of Waitangi. As Helen Tane is one of the authors in chapter 7, it is not surprising that one of the case studies is an oral health one. As some of us know first hand, the provision of oral health services and the uneven level of dental disease in the community is a very good example of the intersection of politics and health in action. It is so good to have a book on health and health care that includes oral health – well done Helen.

Chapter 6 looks at approaches to healthcare provision including psychosocial factors, holism, and integrative versus reductionist care. Chapter 10 looks at technology and health and this includes genetic testing and e-health. Chapters 13 and 14 look at gender and wellbeing as well as influences on

health and wellbeing.

For courses that prepare oral health therapists and dental hygienists for professional practice, students and staff will be interested in chapter 11 on rights, justice, ethics and health; chapter 15 on the patient journey and chapter 16 on professional practice. There is an emerging emphasis on professionalism in Australia and New Zealand and this is evident in the discussion around professional attributes and competencies of the newly qualified dentist / oral health therapist / dental therapist / dental hygienist². It is so good to see professionalism, communication and social skills, critical thinking and health promotion listed well before scientific and clinical knowledge, and patient care in the consultation draft of attributes and competencies of a newly qualified dentist from the Australian Dental Council³. I notice that Wendy Horne is one of the authors of chapter 16 – she was one of the people who commissioned a Report of the Academic Review of Dental Therapy and Related Programmes way back in 1998 for the Wellington Polytechnic⁴. Her passion for interprofessional learning and practice was as evident then as it is today.

In conclusion, I would recommend this book highly as a text for undergraduate oral health therapy and dental hygiene students in health sociology, health promotion and public health. It is well researched and written, comprehensive in its scope, and very easy to read and use.

References

1. Shaw, S. and B. Deed, eds. *Health and Environment in Aotearoa New Zealand*. 2010, Oxford University Press: Melbourne.
2. Cowpe, J., et al., *Profile and Competencies for the Graduating European Dentist - Update 2009*. 2009, Association for Dental Education in Europe: Birmingham.
3. ADC, A.D.C., *Professional Attributes and Competencies of the Newly Qualified Dentist - Consultation Draft*. 2010, Australian Dental Council Melbourne.
4. Short, L.M., et al., *Report of the Academic Review of Dental Therapy and Related Programmes 1998*, Wellington Polytechnic: Wellington. p. 33pp.