
BOOK REVIEWS



Norman V. Carroll. *Financial Management for Pharmacists: A Decision-Making Approach*. Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1991. \$24 (paperback).

We now enter a decade that promises increased change and upheaval as we struggle to provide the health care that Americans have come to expect from increasingly tighter funds. Health care costs have increased faster than other consumer costs through the 1980s. It would be reasonable to expect a strong effort on the part of payers to stem these rising costs. As our population ages, the impetus for cost containment becomes even greater. Federal and state governments, traditional insurers, and corporations will search for new ways to finance these rising health care costs while simultaneously coping with the demands for high-quality care and equal access to care. As a result, we may expect continued centralization of health care delivery organizations and continued financial threats to the survival of independent pharmacies. This environment will intensify the need for pharmacy managers who can effectively gain access to health care funds. Managers who possess financial expertise will greatly benefit themselves as well as the pharmacy profession in the context of health care delivery organizations; hence, a text that effectively presents financial management principles to pharmacy students is vital.

Financial Management for Pharmacists covers the basic topics in financial management. The text is composed of 15 chapters which

present information on financial statements, accounting, ratio analysis, and capital investment decisions. In addition, the areas of budgeting, prescription pricing, cash flow, and inventory control are covered. The text is completed by a description of cost-benefit analysis. These topics are presented in a concise, pragmatic manner. Examples are provided in the areas of hospital and institutional pharmacy management, in addition to retail pharmacy management. Each chapter is concluded with discussion questions, multiple-choice questions, problems, and their answers. This book is designed to aid in teaching the basics of financial management to undergraduate students.

Topics are generally discussed at an introductory level. While this allows a wider range of pharmacy students to grasp the information more readily, it also allows for omission of some areas that may be important. For example, the author devotes a fair amount of coverage to the cash management process, which is crucial to the survival of small businesses. However, this coverage could have been enhanced with a more complete description of the risk-return trade-off policies regarding current assets. In addition, a discussion of the term structure of interest rates may have permitted a better understanding of the use of short-term debt versus long-term debt to finance working capital needs. A description of the sources of capital could have enhanced the capital investment decision topic. A review of the information needs of the individuals who control capital, as well as a review of the format for proposing projects to these individuals, might have been helpful.

The book is well written and succinct. It provides a pragmatic and even-handed approach to the financial management problems faced by both retail and institutional pharmacy managers. The book would be a valuable aid in teaching financial management to pharmacy students.

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Bert Spilker and John Schoenfelder. *Presentation of Clinical Data*. New York: Raven Press, 1990. \$80.

The authors state that the purpose of this book is to illustrate formats for the presentation of clinical data so that the basis for interpretation of that data is clear. This purpose is well served in *Presentation of Clinical Data*. The book is well organized, systematic, and instructional. The 13 chapters provide examples of ways clinical data may be presented. A useful bibliography is included, and the book is adequately indexed. Formats presented include tables, graphs, and figures. Chapters are dedicated to preparing slides; illustrating study designs; demographics and patient accountability; vital signs; laboratory data; adverse reactions; efficacy; pharmacokinetics; quality of life; compliance, concomitant therapy, and cost-effectiveness; meta-analysis; and complex or confusing presentations.

The authors correctly state that there is no single equation or simple formula for choosing formats for the display of clinical data. They suggest that choice of format should be a three-step process of (1) determining whether a table, graph, or figure should be used; (2) determining how the chosen format will be composed; and (3) deciding what data and other information to include in the format. Seven principles for choosing a format are presented. Numerous other practical considerations for selecting a mode for data display are presented.

Clinical data are interpreted and extrapolated by the reader. Tables, graphs, and figures may inadvertently mislead the reader if not properly designed. Poorly designed, suboptimal presentations of clinical data are all too common in the literature. Flawed data displays can have serious negative clinical and economic consequences. References such as *Presentation of Clinical Data*, if properly used, can assist in the accurate presentation and interpretation of clinical data.

Presentation of Clinical Data is a useful reference and should have a broad appeal. Graduate students, students enrolled in Pharm.D. programs with a research component, students in special clinical residencies, and health professionals engaged in fellowships may find the book particularly valuable. Clinical investigators

in academe, government, and the private sector should benefit from the addition of this book to their libraries. Instructors of drug information/drug literature evaluation courses in the baccalaureate in pharmacy and/or Doctor of Pharmacy curricula will find this book a useful adjunct to standard teaching materials.

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