Making Your Case: Using R for Program Evaluation

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There is a growing need for research within practice settings. Increasing competition for funding requires organizations to demonstrate that the funding they are seeking is going towards effective programming. Additionally, the evidence-based practice movement is generally pushing organizations towards research activities, both as producers and consumers.There have been many books written about research methodology and data analysis in the helping professions, and many books have been written about using R to analyze and present data; however, this book specifically addresses using R to evaluate programs in organizational settings.

This book is divided into three sections. The first section addresses background information that is helpful in conducting practice-based research. The second section of the book provides necessary background to begin working with R. Topics include how to download R and RStudio, navigation, R packages, basic R functions, and importing data. This section also introduces The Clinical Record, a freely available database program to help organizations record and track client information. The remainder of the book uses case studies to illustrate how to use R to conduct program evaluations. Techniques include data description and visualization, bivariate analysis, simple and multiple regression, and logistic regression. The final chapter illustrates a comprehensive summary of the skills demonstrated throughout the book using The Clinical Record as a data repository.

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