Stress and Health
Book Review Guidelines

Book Review Editor, Associate Professor Andrew Noblet (Deakin University, Australia)

Aim of book reviews

Stress and Health reviews books that cover any aspect of stress, including sources, manifestations, prevention and treatment. A key objective of this section is to draw readers’ attention to recently released books, or books that have recently come to the attention of this journal, and to highlight how and why the contents might be useful for people researching, practising, or studying in the area of stress and health.

There are a wide range of disciplines, population groups and settings represented in the investigation of stress (see coverage on journal home-page) and, over time, this journal seeks to review books that reflect this diversity. Stress and Health also aims to undertake book reviews that target specific audiences - academics, practitioners and/or students – and we hope that the comments provided by reviewers will help these groups identify books that meet their needs.

Requesting books for review

Readers are invited to nominate books that would be suitable for review by Stress and Health. Authors and publishers of stress-related books may also request reviews, although in these cases we expect that the author/publisher provides at least one inspection copy. When making nominations, an explanation of why the book would be of interest to this journal’s readership should be provided. Requests for reviews should also include a list of 2-4 suitably qualified people who could undertake a well-informed assessment of the publication.

Stress and Health does have a limit to the number of reviews that can be printed in any one issue, due to space constraints. However where the book is deemed to be relevant our readership, and the review is consistent with the guidelines below, every effort will be made to publish this book review in a timely manner.

Please note that reviews will not be considered for publication if they have been published elsewhere, or are under consideration for publication elsewhere. Once accepted for publication, the review becomes the property of Stress and Health.

Book review requests should be sent to the Book Review Editor, Andrew Noblet.

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Guidelines for reviewers

Word-length

Book review submissions should be between 500-800 words, including title, author, year of publication, publishers, number of pages, ISBN, cost, as well as the reviewer’s name and institution.
Due date

Reviews are due within three months of the book being received by the reviewer.

General guidelines

A book review is much more like a critique of a publication, rather than a simple description of its contents. With this in mind, reviewers need to be prepared to make critical judgements about the extent to which the book can add value to the field. ‘Value’ in this context should be based heavily on reviewers’ knowledge of similar books already in circulation and an assessment of the unique contributions made by the text in question. Having a sound understanding of the existing body of knowledge is therefore a pre-requisite for undertaking a well-informed review. If reviewers have any concerns about their knowledge of the background literature, they should contact the Book Review Editor before undertaking the review.

Although contribution to knowledge is an important criterion for reviewing a book, it is not the only one. Other factors that should be considered are highlighted in the format guidelines below.

Format

Introduction. The opening paragraph of the review should state the primary purpose of the book and indicate the broad themes covered. Any introduction should aim to capture the reader’s attention, so this section should be written in a reasonably compact and ‘punchy’ manner.

Main body. The majority of the review should be devoted to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the book and, as mentioned above, this should take into account any unique contributions made by the text. Does the book build on and extend the literature in this area and are there important gaps in existing knowledge and/or practice that are addressed by the text? Conversely, has the text (or sections therein) overlooked, misinterpreted or replicated background research and/or recognised practices? If relevant details are missing, what does this information involve and why is this a notable oversight? Finally, what overall messages can be drawn from the book and how important are these? What can readers gain by understanding or applying this knowledge?

Audience. Reviewers should also consider the intended audience for the text and state whether this group (or groups) would actually benefit from the book’s contents. In making this assessment, reviewers need to take into account structural and formatting issues – is the book organised and written in a way appropriate for the intended audience?

Conclusion and recommendations. The review should conclude with a summary of the book’s strengths and weaknesses. What is the reviewer’s overall assessment of the book and would they recommend it to others. On what grounds have they made this recommendation?