recommends that little is known about how effective other organizations are. Not only are many of them not evaluated in any rigorous manner, but also the designs used in the studies are often weak, resulting in the lack of unequivocal findings. Especially useful (for the scientific reader) is the section on suitable methods for generating scientific evidence of effectiveness in this difficult area of self-help interventions. One hopes that these methods will be used by researchers to accumulate more evidence in the future.

Even if many self-help organizations are not demonstrated to be effective for problems of addiction, their popularity with the people who use them remains high. In part, this might be attributable to what the author treats as more subjective outcomes than those that can easily be measured by researchers. Among such aspects are reports of spiritual and identity change, development of new friendships, and involvement in political action in the community, all of which are likely to improve the quality of life of persons in recovery and contribute to valid positive outcomes.

The author is a well-known figure in the fields of evaluation research and the treatment of substance dependence. He has effectively focused the attention of an international audience on responses to a problem of global dimension.

Addiction to psychoactive substances and related problems have become a serious threat to health and welfare in many parts of the world. Data from WHO show that the abuse of tobacco and alcohol products is a major contributor to the global burden of disease not only in western countries but also in low-mortality developing countries. In spite of this growing burden, there is a dearth of resources and services for managing alcohol and other drug problems in most countries. Even where treatment services are available they are often not accessible, mainly because of an inability to pay for them. Therefore, many people who need help for their substance use problems have come to depend on self-help organizations for treatment and the prevention of relapse.

It emerges clearly that most of the self-help movement is confined to the western world, and the rest of the world is still cautiously experimenting with these models. The best service this book can render is to open the way for the adoption of the self-help philosophy as an option everywhere and to stimulate an ongoing scientific evaluation of its effectiveness.

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