

Book Review:

Drug Testing in the Workplace: A Pilot Study on Trace
Detection Technology
Authors: Lumas, Kay

Lumas, K., (2007). *Drug Testing in the Workplace: A Pilot Study on Trace Detection Technology*, Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller

REVIEWED BY: JOYCE COOPER

As a human resource professional in the private work sector, one of my responsibilities is to drug test all the employees. During a search on information about drug testing methods, I came across a book called *Drug testing in the workplace: A pilot study on trace detection technology* authored by Kay Lumas. I was very intrigued by the clarity of the content in the book, particularly, the explanation on trace detection technology in Chapter two and how it is used to drug test and the limitations of the technology as a drug testing method. There is also a legal case review that helps the reader to understand how this technology has been challenged in the courts. The author calls attention to the use of drugs in the workplace on page 16 and notes "...employers have embraced drug testing as a way to make a statement that they are tough on drugs..."

This work is a dissertation using the qualitative approach to explore a sensitive topic of drug testing with an unknown technology to many in the human resources industry. This is a minor criticism. I would think that the publisher could have formatted the book differently omitting Chapter three, the Methodology, and Chapter four that discusses Data Collection and Analysis to make the reading easier for the layperson or general reader. Upon reviewing the publisher's genre, VDM Verlaq, Dr. Mueller E.K. publishes academic theses and dissertations as a specialty book in the as is format. Specialist books are relevant to specific audiences. In this case, *Drug testing in the workplace: A pilot study on trace detection technology* is suited for the social science community as well as for the human resources and legal communities.

Dr. Lumas begins her analysis of trace technology by stating the purpose of the research study in the abstract. This approach provides a critical analysis of trace detection technology because there is a gap in the empirical literature that addresses trace detection technology and the number of false positives generated with this technology. I agree that there is a gap in the literature, as I had difficulty finding other books on trace technology as a drug testing method.

The author went to great depth in Chapter two of the book outlining the drug problem in the general United States of America population using historic data and current statistical data that are provided by a number of agencies that maintain drug use information. A number of theories on drug use are provided and this material does help the reader to understand the nature of the research that is investigated. All of this information helps to shed light on the problem of drug use in society today and why workplace drug testing continues to be necessary.

In the legal case review section on pages 129 to 142, and added to again on page 146, Dr. Lumas gives a comprehensive review of legal cases that has challenged trace technology and there is also case reviews on the employment relationship and drug testing. I found the discussion perplexing because the courts are inconsistent in their rulings about the constitutionality in the use of trace technology to drug test.

The methodology that is presented in Chapter three utilizes a qualitative approach. I would speculate to say that because the author acknowledges that she had difficulty with getting an

adequate sample size for the study, the method of research chosen was best suited for presenting this type of research data where the study participant explains in his or her own words the experience with this type of technology. I also note that this is a pilot study, so I am anticipating that the author will conduct another study at a later time.

For the most part, the book has helped me as a human resource professional to understand the science of trace detection technology, about trace products on the market that are used to drug test, and the limitations of this technology. The human resource professional will be able to disseminate a great deal of the information on various methods of drug testing because the author gives an indepth discussion in the 'definition of terms' section beginning on page 22. That section is also a good reference guide for employers who are starting new drug-testing program because it compares various types of drug testing methods. I found the information in the section on ' Problems With Workplace Drug Testing' on page 123 to be useful as I evaluated the effectiveness of the drug-testing program at my place of employment. Overall, this book will contribute to a limited body of knowledge on trace technology.

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