

Social Causes of Health and Disease

By William C. Cockerham

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In this stimulating book, William C. Cockerham, a leading medical sociologist, assesses the evidence that social factors (such as stress, poverty, unhealthy lifestyles, and unpleasant living and work conditions) have direct causal effects on health and many diseases.

Noting a new emphasis upon social structure in both theory and multi-level research techniques, the author argues that a paradigm shift has been emerging in 21st-century medical sociology, which looks beyond individual explanations for health and disease. The field has headed toward a fundamentally different orientation, and Cockerham's work has been at the forefront of these changes. The second edition of his compelling account has been thoroughly revised and updated with further contemporary developments, and also includes an expanded discussion of the relationship between race and health as well as new material on health care reform and social policy.

This engaging text will be indispensable reading for all students and scholars of medical sociology, especially those with the courage to confront the possibility that society really does make people sick.

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Editorial Review

Review

“William Cockerham has written a thorough and comprehensive book elucidating the wide range of social causation of disease. Rather than taking a biomedical disease-by-disease approach, Cockerham emphasizes how particular sociological factors produce disease and illness. Established health researchers and neophytes alike will find great value in this volume.”

Peter Conrad, Brandeis University

“Organized around a remarkably broad and cogent theoretical framework, this book is an outstanding resource for medical sociologists in their research and teaching. The empirical and theoretical insights also are deeply relevant for public health professionals and policymakers as they struggle to identify ways to improve the health of communities around the world.”

Eric Wright, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

“Professor Cockerham provides a lively and compelling vindication of the sociological enterprise with respect to understanding the social aetiology of modern health problems. Showing how race, class, and gender matter, this publication is a major contribution to both sociological analysis and policy formation.”

Bryan S. Turner, The Graduate Center CUNY

“In this revised edition William Cockerham develops a strong and challenging case for the role of social factors in health and disease. Drawing on the latest and most important research, *Social Causes of Health and Disease* will stimulate debate and discussion in equal measure – essential reading for students and researchers alike.”

Michael Bury, Royal Holloway, University of London

“This second edition of William Cockerham's acclaimed book updates his argument about the social causes of disease, drawing on the latest research from both the US and UK. His argument about the direct causal effects of social factors on health and disease is compelling and will be of considerable interest to students and researchers of both sides of the Atlantic.”

Jonathan Gabe, Royal Holloway, University of London

About the Author

William C. Cockerham is Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, USA.

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