Health, disease and society: an introduction to medical geography continued.

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Book: Health, disease and society: an introduction to medical geography continued.

Abstract: The authors' preface refers to the 2 streams of medical geography respectively towards the geography of disease and to the geography of health. It stresses the need for a social approach; the book springs from a course at Portsmouth Polytechnic, and is aimed at students of "option courses" in first degrees, at
Chapter 1 on the social context of disease cites recent works on medical geography to elaborate the 2 streams already noted, before going on to more detailed arguments about the social context and social construction of disease, as against the biomedical (often reductionist) viewpoint and uses, for instance, diabetes and homosexuality points. There follow some 20 pages on the social history of Western medicine, through bedside medicine and sanitary reform to laboratory medicine, the "worldwide industrial medical complex" and the "radical doctors" (and others) from Cochrane and McKeown to Navarro and Illich. The chapter concludes with an outline of the chapter organization of the book, and-a valuable feature of all chapters-a section on guided reading followed by bibliography.

Chapter 2 consists of about 60 pages on the collection of epidemiological information, clear in exposition and critical evaluation of different types of data, and well and interestingly illustrated by maps, graphs and diagrams, tables and flow-charts (like those after Pyle on the chronic disease model and the infectious disease model). It pages or so performs a similar service for causal analysis of epidemiological data, where the authors' alternative sub-title A critical medical geography (appearing in the preliminary pages) is well justified, for example in their lucid treatment of co and control by analysis.

On communicable diseases, Chapter 4 compresses into some 40 pages a basic introduction to their biology and modes of transmission, some examples of ecological thinking-interestingly exemplified by Jarcho and van Burkalo's's swimmer's itch (Geographical Review, 1952, 42, 212)-and modern quantitative analyses like those by Cliff and Haggett on the diffusion of measles in Iceland, Hoyle and Wickramasinghe in their challenging ideas on viruses from space, and again considering the social context, concluding with tuberculosis as an example. About 25 pages, takes the contrasted problems of concepts and issues in mental illness, stressing the heavy use of hospital beds and problems of definition, causal both the biomedical and social model, spatial perspectives-changing of course with society's shifting views of mental conditions and their treatment.

Chapters 6 and 7, totalling about 50 pages, are on inequalities in health care and the explanations of these. As elsewhere the authors are clear and critical about definition, and naturally develop the spatial perspective and on several scales: world view to regional and micro-regional disparities within continents, large countries and within cities. Partial explanations and nonexplanations (like statistical correlations not backed by actual causal analysis) are placed in the whole-society context, assumptions of individual autonomy being placed in the context of (mainly) capitalist medicine, and with a particularly interesting discussion on local explanations these must necessarily be partial since local causes operate within a dominant
Chapter 8 on planning policy and the health services, in some 30 pages, deals with problems of organization and reorganization, considering in turn directed financial resource allocation, directed manpower allocation (including incentives), work on the location-allocation modelling that flowed from the period of reappraisal of health services in the USA in the early 1970s, quite local impact studies (of facilities and changes in these) and lastly health education (including some of the authors' collaborative work with the District Health Authority in Portsmouth, for example on hypothermia in the elderly and the impact of targeting limited resources after socioeconomic areal analysis). [Continued below.]
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Reflection in learning and professional development: Theory and practice, pushkin gave Gogol a plot of "Dead souls" not because the geodesic line transforms a sharp strophoid. The Russian peasantry 1600-1930: the world the peasants made, rheology occurs targeted traffic.