

Book Review: Health and Society. Personal and Social Determinants of Health

Maurice N. Cauchi

Malta: Malta University Press (2018); 203 pages

REVIEWED BY LINO BRIGUGLIO

This new book deals with various topics of current interest to the community including with the changing patterns of disease. Significant changes within society, as well as new research findings have resulted in changes in our concepts of disease, their causes and their effect on the individual and society.

There is no doubt that genetic as well as environmental factors are responsible for the generation of disease, yet, while the former have been fixed for generations, environmental factors seem to keep changing all the time.

Following a chapter summarising various sociological aspects of Maltese social life, the book deals with topics including the role that affluence has on the changing patterns of disease. It is quite likely that most of the increase in the prevalence of conditions like high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes can be linked directly to our changing way of life as determined by affluence.

Disease does not occur in a vacuum, and genetic make-up of the individual certainly provides the essential background on which the environment works its way.

Another chapter deals with genetic issues as they relate to disease production. More and more these days genes are being discovered which have an undoubted role not only in disease production, but also which underlie behavioural tendencies such as educational achievement, tendency to addictions, and which may indeed act as the social glue that binds us together.

One of the most significant developments of the past decade is the way that digital technology has infiltrated into our society, for good or bad. One chapter deals with the health and social effects of the digital age on our community.

Other chapters deal with personal and societal responsibility for our health, as well as the role of medical practice in today's world.

Professor Cauchi is well known in our community for his several publications, including contributions to local papers on various topics.

The book, which is published by the University of Malta, is available from various bookshops, as well as from the University Gozo Campus, Xewkija, Gozo.

