Ten editorials described the ideal minister of health: a timely proposal to discuss the necessary qualifications of the ideal health minister

Economically naive finance ministers would not last, while health naive MoH tend to flourish. Do health professionals recognize, accept, and expect a genuine lack of health sophistication among MoHs? The science of health differs from the politics of health, as the science of economics differs from the politics of economics, however nobody accepts a finance minister without studies in the science of economics.

Will the proposed safety valve work every time? Perhaps not, but someone can expect it to work most times. An MPH is just the minimum guarantee. Moreover, MPH holders could help a colleague to live up to the occasion; but first of all they should demand that nobody without an MPH could become a MoH. Public health managers “must be trained in public health to postgraduate level”1; it is ironic that the same is not a prerequisite for the manager of managers, the MoH. Do we believe in born MoHs?

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References

A dictionary of public health


“This is a comprehensive collection, compilation, and interpretation of definitions of public health vocabulary. It encompasses various disciplines and related fields including Epidemiology, Statistics, Social Sciences, Demography & Population Sciences, International Health, Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Health Planning, Mental Health, Community Medicine, Preventive Medicine, etc”. This presentation of the book made by the author summarises perfectly the purpose and contents of the book.

The relevance of the book is possibly that it includes terms related to a great variety of subjects and disciplines in public health, usually only included in specific volumes.

The author, as it is recorded on the back of the book, “has been actively involved in social, mental and environmental health movement in India”. This professional career is in accordance with the important psychosocial approach that is kept through the book. He compiles with the same relevance traditional definitions like “intention to treat analysis?” or “global burden of disease”, with others more recently incorporated to public health, such as, “social capital”, “equity in health”, “medical negligence”, or “medicalisation” among many others. Definitions related to new health problems as “dioxin” or “Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease” coexist with old health problems such as “diphtheria” or “HIV/AIDS”.

Finally, this dictionary contains more than 1500 entries that include a considerable number of tables, graphics, figures, and formulas. In addition, more than one third of the definitions contained in this dictionary are supported by recently updated bibliographical references. This is another noteworthy aspect that makes this dictionary, easy to read and manage despite its length and large number of definitions.

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BOOK REVIEW

CORRECTION

An error occurred in this article by Calafell and Malats (2003;57:398–400). On page 399 in the section “Misense mutation” the first sentence should have read ATG GTG CAC CTG ACT to ATG GTG CAC GTG ACT ATG (not GTGCAC CTG ACT to ATG GTG CAC GTG ACT GTG).