

IN THIS ISSUE

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Joint Editors

VALUES, RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND PUBLIC HEALTH—OH YES, AND AVOID FORNICATION!

In this issue, there is a strong tone of the need to think about our underlying values and assumptions in public health. Beginning with an Editorial that looks critically at conventional assumptions about malaria treatment and concludes that “malaria must be tackled as an economic and social issue”, but that little attention has been paid to social factors such as gender, marginalisation, and inequity in designing malaria control programmes. From malaria to genetics, where Mackenbach encourages the debate about community genetics versus public health genetics, with the optimistic thought that the influence of health promotion ideas has reduced the dangers of paternalism in the new genetics. And Speaker’s Corner argues for more attention to be paid to the demands of citizens and the right to health.

See pages 178, 179, 181

Our Glossary this month tackles the important issue of injury prevention, a huge public health issue that is often nowhere on the radar of national departments of public health.

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In Evidence Based Policy and Practice this month, we have:

- some intriguing findings from Shanghai on the possible association between the SARS outbreak and weather conditions;
- an argument from Doyle and colleagues for a systematic approach to systematic public health reviews;
- and from Glasgow, some further thoughts on the way forward in the detection of genital chlamydial infection.

See pages 186, 193, 198

Our Research Reports include a number of contributions on inequalities, but perhaps the most novel paper this month is the finding from California of a significant increase in ischaemic heart disease deaths before the millennial new year’s day (exaggerated excitement and anticipation are suggested as possible factors). Other research findings include:

- a range of features of the neighbourhood environment are associated with self rated health, and may be indicators of important causal pathways;
- in an area of increased interest, that of how education affects health, educational inequalities in mortality were explained by material, psychosocial, and behavioural factors;
- from Pakistan, space-time clustering of childhood leukaemia cases points to an environmental exposure (possibly infection);
- dislike of school is associated with subsequent increased risk of teenage pregnancy (somehow this doesn’t surprise me!);
- a comparison of six countries found an increase in all cause mortality in deprived neighbourhoods independently of individual socioeconomic characteristics;
- workers who survive the downsizing of their companies seem to have an increased risk of occupational disability;
- further evidence that movements between paid employment and various forms of non-employment have an impact on mental health.

See pages 205, 207, 214, 221, 223, 231, 238, 243

Book Reviews to note this month include: a new publication from Alicante on the use of evidence in health policy decisions; and an overview of recent case studies of when food kills, edited by Pennington.

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Oh yes, and avoid fornication... see the Gallery.

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