

# IN THIS ISSUE

Carlos Alvarez-Dardet, John R Ashton  
Joint Editors

## COMPLEXITY, ECOLOGY, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND ISN'T IT TIME TO STUDY THE WEALTHY?

The story is told of a bank robber up before the court. The judge asked him why he robbed banks. "Because that's where the money is," he replied. We talk about health, but we obsessively research the unhealthy and the poor. In this issue, Fran Baum argues for the need to research the wealthy, and for that research to inform healthy policy and the redistribution of wealth to improve health.

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Two other major themes run through this month's issue. A paper by Li and colleagues, from Oregon, reports findings on neighbourhood built environment characteristics and the promotion of walking and urban mobility. This paper is picked up by Bauman and Ewing in two related Editorials, which argue the case for a much more systematic programme of research to explore the connections between urban planning, the physical environment, and the way in which healthy lifestyles and behaviour are influenced by them. A further Editorial by Matera and Baglio, which is relevant to this discussion, explores the modern complexity of public health research.

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This Editorial is also relevant to the second major theme, on social networks

and health. Again a Research Report, this time from Australia by Giles *et al*, explores the 10 year survival in very old Australians in relation to their social networks. Related Editorials, this time by Jorm and by Mendes de Leon, state that it is time for an intervention trial on social networks and health, and asks, "why do friendships matter for survival?"

See pages 574, 537, 538

Speaker's Corner sounds off on psychosocial epidemiology, social structure, and ideology. The *JECH* Gallery goes underground to learn some lessons from sanitation, and visits Argentina in the first of a new series reflecting the public health reality of children. The section on Continuing Professional Education offers a timely Glossary of terms for use in exploring the health effects of electric and magnetic fields.

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And if that was not enough, the findings from other Research Reports this month include:

- the rates of coronary events increase during comparatively cold periods, especially in warm climates;
- there are significant and meaningful differences between the Scottish and English in the prevalence of several ischaemic heart disease risk factors;
- the socioeconomic and physical environments of neighbourhoods are associated with individual level smoking;
- physically and psychosocially demanding working conditions are associated with an increased reporting of pelvic pain in pregnancy;
- influenza and respiratory syncytial virus account for similar numbers of deaths in children in England;
- children born into social classes II, IIINM, IIIM, IV, and V were more likely to be admitted to hospital, spend longer in hospital overall, and generate greater hospital costs than children born into social class I in southern England;
- there is little, or an inverse association, between unemployment and suicide in people with psychiatric illness in Denmark.

See pages 551, 565, 568, 580, 586, 591, 598

Finally, an interesting paper on Theory and Methods explores the use of concept mapping in uncovering neighbourhood influences on intimate partner violence.

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Complexity, urban planning, wealth, social networks, the environment—a rich pot pourri to which we should return.