



HEALTH DETERMINANTS IN THE SCOPE OF NEW PUBLIC HEALTH

A HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS, RESEARCHERS AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Editors:

LIDIA GEORGIEVA AND GENC BURAZERI

Editorial Assistance:

Mariana Dyakova and Bosiljka Đikanović

PH-SEE Project Coordinators:

Ulrich Laaser and Luka Kovačić

Authors from:

WHO

European Commission

Albania

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bulgaria

Croatia

England, UK

Germany

Romania

Republic of Macedonia

Serbia and Montenegro

Slovenia

Switzerland

USA

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PREFACE

Since Antonovski's salutogenetic paradigm we are used to concentrate on health instead of disease. This orientation is important as it opens the door for prevention and health promotion. However, also in this regard we need to know what factors to influence and how to measure the effects of our interventions. Therefore the analysis of the determinants of health rightfully is one of the core areas of public health research and of the health sciences in general.

Although the physical and psychosocial determinants of health and disease are widely the same in all human populations their relative importance and their interaction are more specific for a certain ethnical, geographical and historical context. For this reason it is justified and even mandatory to present the issue here with reference to the South Eastern European region. An additional argument can be derived from the given historical situation where a dynamic scientific and professional development and open exchange had been interrupted for more than half a century. Therefore it is not the least important that - as in the other books of this series - authors from many countries in the region contributed and interacted with each other and provide to the scholars of the health sciences an excellent example of international cooperation.

The editors categorized the determinants of health into genetic, social, psychological, lifestyle, environmental, occupational and policy factors where at least public health genetics opens an entirely new field with great potential for the health of the people. But astonishingly also the analysis of social gradients has long been neglected as a problem which must not exist for ideological reasons under the former communist regimes.

The book is mainly thought to support the lecturers in the new universities and teaching programmes in South Eastern Europe and provide to the students a synopsis of the relevant knowledge. Nevertheless public health practitioners and decision makers can find here useful background information for better understanding the mechanisms of health and disease, applicable in the day to day work.

Finally as the principal investigators of the Public Health Collaboration in South Eastern Europe we have again to express our sincerest thanks to the editors and authors for their dedication and patience and an enormous amount of unpaid work. The reward may be the established collegiality and friendship among us and the professional network created.

Prof. Dr. med. Ulrich Laaser
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Bielefeld, Germany

Prof. Dr. med. Luka Kovačić
Andrija Stampar School of Public Health
Medical Faculty of Zagreb, Croatia

Prof. Dr. med. Tzekomir Vodenicharov
Dean, Faculty of Public Health
Medical University – Sofia, Bulgaria

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Assoc. Prof. Lidia Georgieva
Faculty of Public Health
Sofia, Bulgaria

Dr. Genc Burazeri
Faculty of Medicine
Tirana, Albania

LIST OF AUTHORS

Arsov Todor, Republic of Macedonia

Artnik Barbara, Slovenia

Bambra Clare, England, UK

Brand Angela, Germany

Brand Helmut, Germany

Brumen,Vlatka, Croatia

Bulat Petar, Serbia and Montenegro

Burazeri Genc, Albania

Butchart Alexander, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland

Csiki Irma Eva, Bucharest

Cucić Viktorija, Serbia and Montenegro

Dabrock Peter, Germany

DeGolia Peter, U.S.A.

Dimitrova Rostislava, Bulgaria

Đikanović Bosiljka, Serbia and Montenegro

Donev Dončo, Republic of Macedonia

Dyakova Mariana, Bulgaria

Eckenfels Edward J., U.S.A.

Elkeles Thomas, Germany

Efinska-Mladenovska Olivija, Republic of Macedonia

Fimka Tozija, Republic of Macedonia

Fox Debbie, England, UK

Galan Adriana, Romania

Genchev Gencho, Bulgaria

Georgieva Jenia, Bulgaria

Georgieva Lidia, Bulgaria

Gjorgjev Dragan, Republic of Macedonia

Ilić Jelena, Serbia and Montenegro

Karadzinska-Bislimovska Jovanka, Republic of Macedonia

Kendrovski Vladimir, Republic of Macedonia

Kochubovski Mihail, Republic of Macedonia

Kovačević Lana, Croatia

Laaser Ulrich, Germany

Matejić Bojana, Serbia and Montenegro

Merkel Bernard, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium

Minov Jordan, Republic of Macedonia

Moormann Thomas, Germany

Pekmezovic Tatjana, Serbia and Montenegro

Petlichkovski Aleksandar, Republic of Macedonia

Popova Sashka, Bulgaria

Powles John, England, UK

Pranjić Nurka, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Risteska-Kuc Snezana, Macedonia

Roshi Enver, Albania,

Sbutega-Milošević Gorica, Serbia and Montenegro

Schröder Peter, Germany

Scîntee Silvia-Gabriela, Romania

Scott-Samuel Alex, England, UK

Shipkovenska Elena, Bulgaria

Spiroski Mirko, Republic of Macedonia

Stikova Elisaveta, Republic of Macedonia

Strezova Ana, Republic of Macedonia

Tavanxhi Nertila, UNAIDS, Geneva, Switzerland

Terzić Zorica, Serbia and Montenegro

Trajkov Dejan, Republic of Macedonia

Ungurean Carmen, Romania

Vodenicharov Tzekomir, Bulgaria

Zaharieva Elena, Republic of Macedonia