



Medical Sociology

Updated: October 5, 2012.

Definition

Medical sociology is concerned with the relationship between social factors and health, and with the application of sociological theory and research techniques to questions related to health and the health care system.

Discussion

Typical areas of research include the influence of ethnicity, gender, age, or socioeconomic status on the access to and quality of health care; health and risk taking behaviors; social constructs of illness; health beliefs and perceptions; health effects of sociocultural changes; the role of health institutions and health professionals in society; the social implications of biomedical innovations, education, and communication; and other sociological aspects of medical organization and practice.

Scope and emphasis

Collected comprehensively.

Selection questions sometimes arise because of the characteristically multidisciplinary nature of the field, especially in such areas as life course research (childhood, aging), crime, substance abuse, sexuality, and gender issues. When reviewing interdisciplinary works, NLM bases selection decisions on the extent of a work's health related content.

Special considerations

The [Library of Congress](#) maintains an extensive collection of works on sociology and related fields.