

A systematic review of key issues in public health

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Abstrak

This book is in many ways a manual for the public health decathlete, although the editors have gone much further by including 15, not 10, items. These items cover many of the contemporary challenges confronting population health. Seven chapters review the changing burden of disease and injury, providing many examples of the tremendous successes of the public health community. The most celebrated have been those in the struggle against communicable disease, with the authors noting achievements in transforming acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) into a condition that those infected die with rather than from. However, there are others, less well-recognised, such as the 50 % decline in mortality from cardiovascular disease in North Western Europe in the past four decades. Yet, as the authors of all of these chapters note, progress is not inevitable. Communicable diseases that once seemed to be coming under control are reappearing, such as tuberculosis, but now in a much more alarming drug-resistant form. Indeed, antimicrobial resistance is now recognised as a global threat, potentially posing an existential threat to humanity, just like climate change. Failure by governments to act against the vectors of non-communicable disease, and especially the major corporations that profit from sales of unhealthy products, for example by placing considerations of health above those of trade liberalisation, has permitted the spread of obesogenic and alcogenic environments, with profound consequences for our future health.