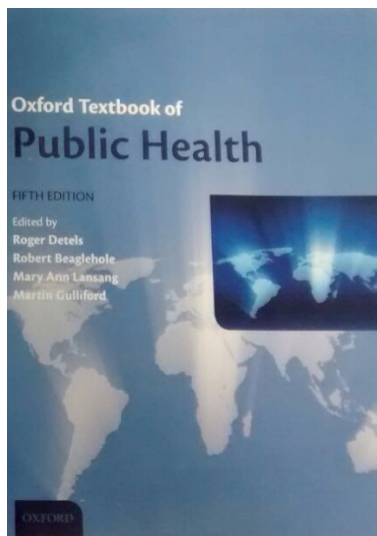


REVIEW OF "OXFORD TEXTBOOK OF PUBLIC HEALTH"

Claudia Arab¹, Thaiany Pedrozo Campos Antunes², Renata Thais de Almeida Barbosa²,
Tânia Brusque Crocetta², Italla Maria Pinheiro Bezerra², Celso Ferreira¹

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Review the work of: Detels R, Beaglehole R, Lansang MA, Gulliford M, editors. Oxford textbook of public health. 5th ed. New York: Oxford University Press; 2011. 1769 p.



The fifth edition of the "Oxford textbook of public health", edited by Roger Detels, Robert Beaglehole, Mary Ann Lansang and Martin Gulliford, consists of 12 sections grouped into three volumes: scope, methods, and practices of public health. This edition deals with the development and application of science of disease prevention, increased longevity and health promotion by community action, to promote the physical, psychological and mental well-being of subjects, involving technology, social sciences, and politics. Each chapter describes public health problems, how to avoid them by early identification, suggestions, presentation of strategies for solving these problems, and evaluations of actions' effectiveness.

The entire book addresses public health in developed, emerging, and developing countries.

Volume I presents the history of public health, determinants of health and disease, policies, laws and their ethics.

In the first section, public health actions are described in different countries. In developed

countries, public health relies on epidemic response, policing cities, and systematic efforts to improve population health. Underdeveloped countries adopt legislative measures and interventions, environmental and educational activities, including tobacco and alcohol reduction, proper nutrition and physical activity promotion, or adoption of multi-sector action for road safety and injury prevention. Emerging countries have growing market economies that substantially mold the private sector and the population seeking information on health behavior, with direct impacts on the quality of care and the growing inequalities in access to health care.

The determinants of health and disease are discussed in second sections in topics of globalization, risk behaviors, diet, environmental factors, water, basic sanitation, and infectious diseases, associated with the growth in chronic diseases. Health policies aim to maintain and improve health conditions and it is necessary to understand health and disease to determine biological, political, social, and environmental lifestyle factors that influence them. Access to knowledge and technology emerge as agents responsible for some decline in the mortality rate of populations.

The third and fourth sections demonstrate that legally binding international treaties and national constitutions provide the right to the highest level of health, supported by law, but these actions are dependent on the regent States.

Volume II presents public health methods divided into four sections: a) information systems and sources of intelligence, b) epidemiological and biostatistical approaches, c) social science techniques, and d) environmental and occupational health sciences.

The advances in information and communication systems highlight the effective applications driven by technologies, particularly Information and Communication Technologies, thanks to the advent of the Internet and the spread of its use. The authors present the challenges of necessary infrastructure for the dissemination of information on public health, the protection and confidentiality of obtained data, and the sources of

¹ Medicina (Cardiologia), Universidade Federal de São Paulo.

¹ Laboratório de Delineamento de Estudos e Escrita Científica, Departamento de Saúde da Coletividade, Faculdade de Medicina do ABC.

Corresponding author: ac.arabclaudia@gmail.com

public health information for system integration that will assist low-income countries to effectively identify, plan, and monitor their health problems to better solve them.

The Epidemiology and Biostatistics section presents the uses and limitations of various study designs and how these variations designs are being applied in new ways. It also discusses interventions applied in developed, emerging, and low-income countries, as well as the statistical models and their applications.

The authors bring the contribution of sociology and psychology to public health, making links between medicine and health, and perspectives and methods of qualitative research. This section concludes with health promotion and education approaches, followed by management and governance programs of public health.

This volume ends with the contribution of interventions on environmental factors, chemical, biological or physical agents, with current topics such as radiation, genetics, hospital infection, climate change, and how people perceive the risks they are exposed to.

The latest volume presents the practice of public health, also grouped into four sections: a) major health problems, b) prevention and control of public health hazards, c) public health needs of population groups, and d) public health functions.

The major public health problems are highlighted by the chapter beginning with the interactions between genetics and the environment, and vascular, respiratory, neurological, musculoskeletal, and hepatological diseases. This section also covers mental and dental health, by discussing systemic diseases for general public health, such as diabetes mellitus, obesity, neoplasms, transmissible encephalopathy, sexually transmitted infections, and emerging and re-emerging infections.

The control of general risk factors such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs, violence, urban life aspects, and bioterrorism, are presented with worldwide data highlighting actions that depend primarily on the efforts of education and multidisciplinary prevention programs.

The needs of population groups begin with changes in the family environment. It provides an overview of the influence of families in health care by relating the problems, risk factors, possible interventions, preventive health, and associated

factors. Also presented are the influence of sex and gender on health, child and adolescent health, minority ethnic groups, indigenous, disabled, and elderly people. Key points are made and improvements recommended in activities among health communities to transform and improve their lives and experiences.

The public health functions are presented in the last section and they are defined as 'ability to benefit' focusing on the need for self-care and quality of life. Socioeconomic inequality, psychosocial factors, and lifestyle are observed as resulting in differences in the health sector especially in developing countries. Screening program implementation is especially important because of prevention and control of transmissible chronic and infectious diseases. The section concludes with the challenges of the 21st century related to health systems and perspectives advocated.

The 12 sections are presented in 104 subsections by more than 200 researchers, who bring examples and effective actions, besides key points of the subject matter. The logic of the themes expressed in the three volumes is clear and direct.

The inclusion of a volume about the methods applied to public health with major research designs allows the reader to understand definitions and the most recommended statistical tests. Practical examples and analysis of cause and effect are demonstrated. Despite differences between countries because of development level, needs and problems are similar, as are the principles. Policies and scientific advances are somehow worthless if there is so much inequality in society between and within countries. Health is needed for all nations regardless of social class.

Although the volume of information distributed over 1,700 pages is extensive, the style is accessible and essential to understand and implement public health. The reading was hugely enlightening in the discussions about each topic proposed by the book during one semester of the course 'Scientific Writing', in the School of Medicine of ABC (Santo Andre, Brazil).

REFERENCE

Detels R, Beaglehole R, Lansang MA, Gulliford M (Eds). *Oxford Textbook of Public Health*. 5th ed. New York: Oxford University Press; 2011. 1769 p.