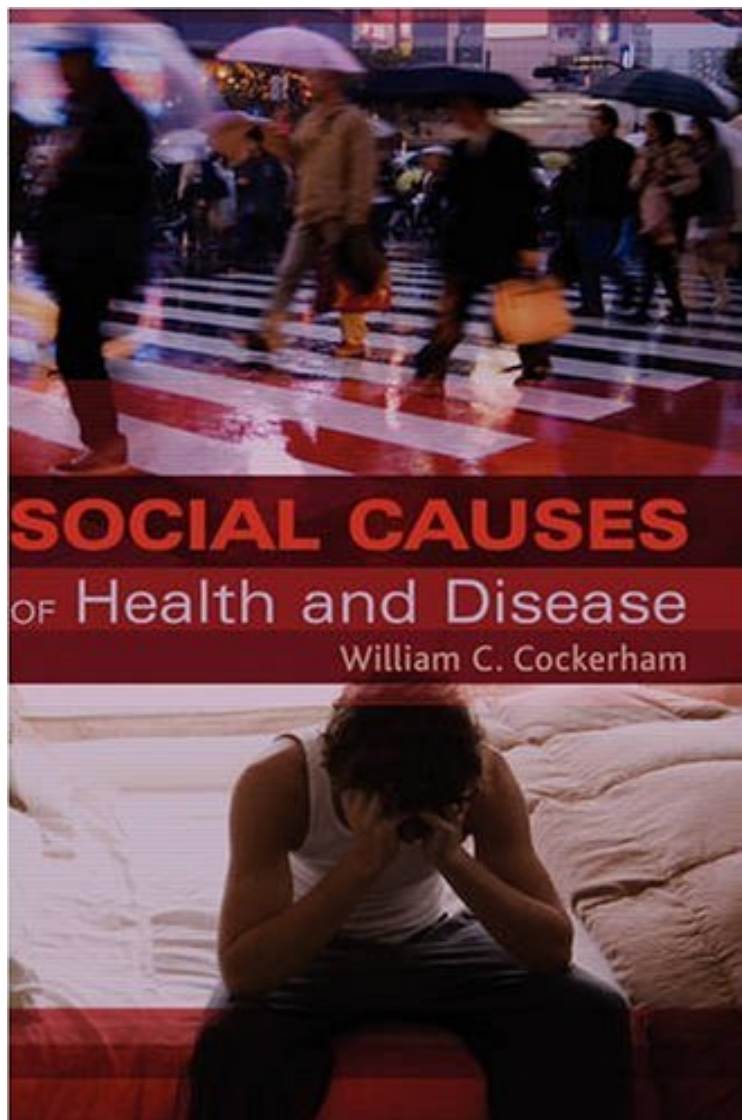


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Social Causes of Health and Disease

William C. Cockerham

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In this exciting new book, William Cockerham, a leading medical sociologist, assesses the evidence that social factors have direct causal effects on health and many diseases. He argues that stress, poverty, unhealthy lifestyles, and unpleasant living and work conditions can all be directly associated with illness. Noting a new emphasis upon social structure in both theory and multi-level research techniques, he argues that a paradigm shift is now emerging in 21st century medical sociology, which looks beyond individual explanations for health and disease. As the old gives way to the new in medical sociology, the field is headed toward a fundamentally different orientation. William Cockerham's clear and compelling account is at the forefront of these changes. This lively and accessible book offers a coherent introduction to social epidemiology, as well as challenging aspects of the existing literature. It will be indispensable reading for all students and scholars of medical sociology, especially those with the courage to confront the possibility that society really does make people sick.

Cockerham manages very expertly to produce a theoretical argument clearly and powerfully, which is richly informed by empirical data and evidence. *Sociology of Health and Illness* Cockerham's book is timely and instructive for sociologists who wish to research the social determinants of health. *British Journal of Sociology* *Social Causes of Health and Disease* will be an extremely useful tool for teachers of medical sociology and others looking for an introduction to the subject that is both scholarly and accessible. Particularly noteworthy and exciting is Cockerham's health lifestyles model, with his square focus on socioeconomic conditions and other social factors as causes of human health and illness, and his cutting-edge treatment of the interplay of structure and agency in this process. Also extremely valuable is his thoughtful placement of medical sociology in the history of American and British sociology.

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Mike Bury, University of London

From the Back Cover In this exciting book, William Cockerham, a leading medical sociologist, assesses the evidence that social factors have direct causal effects on health and many diseases. He argues that stress, poverty, unhealthy lifestyles, and unpleasant living and work conditions can all be directly associated with illness. Noting a new emphasis upon social structure in both theory and multi-level research techniques, he argues that a paradigm shift is now emerging in 21st century medical sociology, which looks beyond individual explanations for health and disease. As the old gives way to the new in medical sociology, the field is headed toward a fundamentally different orientation. William Cockerham's clear and compelling account is at the forefront of these changes. This lively and accessible book offers a coherent introduction to social epidemiology, as well as challenging aspects of the existing literature. It will be indispensable reading for all students and scholars of medical sociology, especially those with the courage to confront the possibility that society really does make people sick.

About the Author William Cockerham is Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, USA.