



Religion as a Social Determinant of Public Health

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Frequently in partnership, but sometimes at odds, religious institutions and public health institutions work to improve the well-being of their communities. There is increasing awareness among public health professionals and the general public that the social conditions of poverty, lack of education, income inequality, poor working conditions, and experiences of discrimination play a dominant role in determining health status. But this broad view of the social determinants of health has largely ignored the role of religious practices and institutions in shaping the life conditions of billions around the globe.

In *Religion as a Social Determinant of Public Health*, leading scholars in the social sciences, public health, and religion address this omission by examining the embodied sacred practices of the world's religions, the history of alignment and tension between religious and public health institutions, the research on the health impact of religious practice throughout the life course, and the role of religious institutions in health and development efforts around the globe. In addition, the volume explores religion's role in the ongoing epidemics of HIV/AIDS and Alzheimer's disease, as well as preparations for an influenza pandemic. Together, these groundbreaking essays help complete the picture of the social determinants of health by including religion, which has until now been an invisible determinant.

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