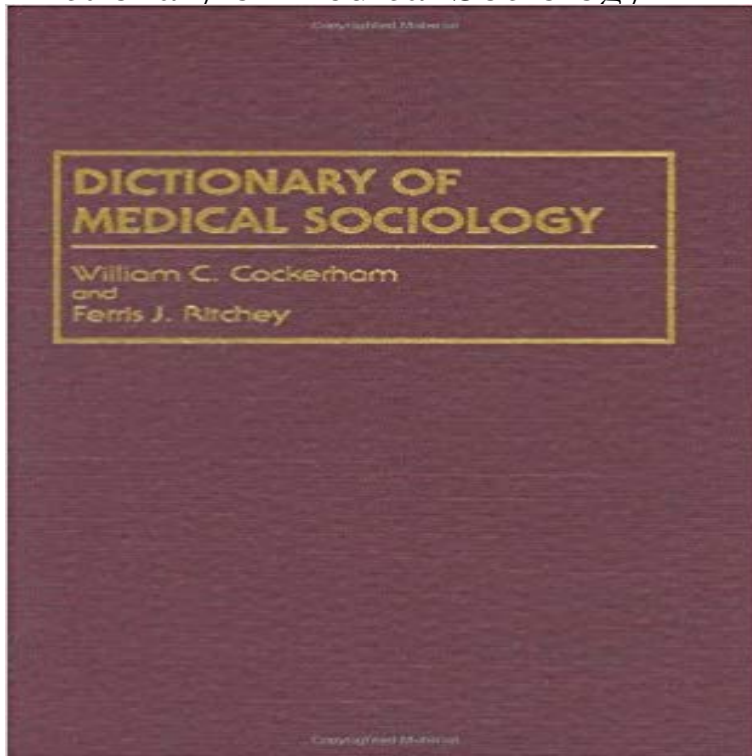


Dictionary of Medical Sociology



As a sociological specialty, medical sociology has a distinct history and literature spanning more than four decades. Since its inception in the years following World War II, medical sociology has attracted significant funds for research, provided extensive employment opportunities within and outside the academy, and produced an increasing number of professional publications. The Medical Sociology Section is the largest specialty represented in both the British and German Sociological Associations and is the second largest among American sociologists. Unlike other, more theoretically oriented branches of sociology, medical sociology was expected by funding agencies and policymakers to produce social knowledge that could be readily applied in medical practice, public health campaigns, and health policy formulation. Thus medical sociology is of interest not only to sociologists, but also to physicians, nurses, psychologists, social workers, therapists, hospital administrators, health insurers, health economists, and others who rely on the basic insights of sociology in research, patient care, and job performance. Like other disciplines, medical sociology has its own fundamental terms and concepts. This reference book concisely defines those terms and is thus a necessary guide for medical sociologists and for practitioners and researchers in related fields. The volume begins with an introductory essay that traces the history of medical sociology. The dictionary then presents short, alphabetically arranged entries for numerous terms. Entries provide a definition of the term and generally discuss the theoretical and practical significance of the topic. For appropriate entries, cross-references to related terms are provided. Entries cite relevant literature, and the volume closes with a bibliography of works cited.

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