

# BOOK REVIEWS

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## **Sleep, Health and Society. From Aetiology to Public Health**

*Edited by Francesco P. Cappuccio, Michelle M. Miller and Steven W. Lockley. Published by Oxford University Press, 2010, ISBN. 978-0-19-956659-4. Price: £60 (rrp). 471 pp.*



This book is one of the first comprehensive reviews of the epidemiology of sleep. With the advent of the ‘24 hour society’ and the increasing recognition and prevalence of sleep disorders, this is a very timely publication. The editors are three eminent professors in the fields of cardiovascular disease, public health and sleep medicine. They have collated the contributions of 35 international experts.

This book will be of interest to those in public health and occupational health and for all health care practitioners, managing the effects of changing or disordered sleep patterns.

The book has 21 chapters. The first gives an appropriately brief historical perspective, highlighting the rapid recent growth in knowledge in this subject. The subsequent chapters cover sleep physiology and sleep-associated mortality and morbidity. There are chapters on risk factors for cardiovascular disease and the interrelationship with sleep and on metabolic and respiratory disease, mental health and neurology, child health and immunology and biochemical and genetic mechanisms of sleep disorder. Later chapters cover sociological aspects, with an extensive review of shift work, including medical practice and performance and, topically, the European Working Time Directive. The book concludes with ethical and legal commentaries.

The book is written in a variety of styles, each well suited to the chapter topic. This makes it easy to dip into or to read more continuously. The content is well informed and referenced and well presented with summary boxes to highlight key points.

This book is a comprehensive review of the epidemiology of sleep. My only negative comment is that the editors did not need to include the same quote from William Shakespeare in three different chapters!

I like a different quote in the book; 'If sleep doesn't serve an absolutely vital function it is the biggest mistake evolution ever made!' (Alan Rechtschaffen). This expresses the importance of this book.

## Rating

★★★ (Very useful reference)

**Nick Walker**