

Putting the course in context:

Sociology is a social science.

What is "science"?

The development of knowledge, ultimately presented in the form of laws and theories and gained through a systematic examination of facts (research methods).

Mike I. in search of knowledge

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqO7-iK3qs0&feature=share>

What are "theories"?

How about hypotheses?

Why do I "enjoy" developing/adding to social theory?

Social Research Methods for Medical Sociology

Can you name a few?

Survey Research

(includes random samples, large data sets such as NHANES)

Qualitative Research

(e.g., observation, focus groups, participant observation)

Statistical Analysis

So, as a social science, what is the purpose of medical sociology?

1. To **generate theories** (i.e., understanding) about health and its relationship to human interactions from small group behavior to societies and
2. To **test them to determine their accuracy** using scientific research methods.

In sociology, there are two primary social theories or ways of viewing how society works

Any idea what these might be?

1. **Structure function theory** states that all the parts of society work together to produce a functioning society
2. **Conflict theory** states that the parts of society are constantly in conflict with one another

Structure-Function Theory

- Society is like a complex **organism**, made up of interrelated parts (structures) that work (function) together.
- Like an organism, if society is to function smoothly, its parts or structures must **work together** in harmony.
- **Dysfunction**—when a part is not functional (e.g., paying high sum for medicines encourages new discoveries but is dysfunctional in that lower-income people cannot afford them)

Conflict Theory

- States that the **nature of society** is NOT one where everything works together but instead:
- there is constant competition or conflict for **scarce resources**.
- The result is constant **battles between groups** and individuals.
- Weitz (author of your book) focuses on power struggles between groups in what she calls a "**critical approach**" to understanding healthcare

The ways of viewing an issue (the perspectives) can be very different



Which do you think is the "correct" theory for explaining how health care system works?

Everything is attempting to work together to keep people healthy (**structure function perspective**) or everything is competing for scarce resources (**conflict perspective**)?

The sociological perspective focuses on social patterns rather than individual behaviors

There is an American belief that individuals create their own fates and that *anyone can succeed if he or she tries hard enough.*

Do you agree? How might the sociological perspective differ from this American belief?

Sociology in Medicine

vs

Sociology of Medicine

Any idea of the differences between the two?

The study of social issues of importance to the medical field; (e.g., important to MDs, for example, why don't patients follow doctor's orders)

VS

The broader sociological study of the health care system

Sociology of Medicine:

What is the Epidemiological Transition?

Hint: the transition is between primitive and advanced societies

A move from acute concerns when the society is undeveloped (acute=typically infectious diseases that strike quickly and can be deadly, e.g., influenza, measles)

to

chronic diseases as the society develops and learns to cure acute diseases so people live longer (chronic=those that last for years, e.g., muscular dystrophy, asthma, arthritis)

The medical profession has been accused of seeking cures for a patient's symptoms but not looking for the underlying causes.

Why would this be?

■ Too many patients too little time

■ Capitalist health care system—the goal is to make money (the more procedures the MD does the more \$ the MD makes)

How might medical professionals practice medicine differently in a national (or universal) health care system?

(e.g., Great Britain, France, Germany, Ukraine, Spain, Italy, all advanced nations other than the U.S.)

An "illness" is considered a social phenomenon.

How can it be seen that way?

How are illnesses related to social situations?

Social situations cause the spreading of diseases/illness and illnesses have social consequences

Illnesses affect one's sense of identity, relationships w/family



■ YouTube on health care, ranked 37 (5 minutes)

■ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVgOl3cETb4>

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How to make diseases disappear | Rangan Chatterjee | TEDxLiverpool (medicine needs to address the cause not just the symptoms) (18 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaY4m00wXpw>

**Social Determinants of Health - an introduction
(9 mins)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PH4JYfF4Ns>

**Sir Michael Marmot: Social Determinants of Health
(2014 WORLD.MINDS) (compares U.S. to other
countries (22 mins; first 3 mins make point)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-2bf205upQ>

**Social Determinants of Health: Claire Pomeroy at
TEDxUCDavis (speaker experienced low status and
how it affects people: start at 6:20 – 15:00)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyKD-2AXKIU>

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