



The New York Academy of Medicine and the Royal Society of Medicine have enjoyed a close and productive relationship for many years, including library and conference privileges as well as access to RSM housing for NYAM Fellows visiting London. In the past decade we have conducted annual joint conferences on topics of mutual interest in medicine and public health.

Attached is a summary of our 2010 meeting, held in London with the inclusion of the Swedish Society of Medicine. The full proceedings are available in *Social Science and Medicine* and on its web site, www.socialscienceandmedicine.com.

***Health, wealth and ways of life: What can we learn from the Swedish, US and UK experience?
A collection of commentaries***

This collection of commentaries arises from a meeting at the Royal Society of Medicine, London, in September 2010, entitled '*Health, Wealth and Ways of Life*,' which reviewed and compared knowledge and experience from the UK, USA, and Sweden. The event was organized in partnership between the Royal Society of Medicine in the UK, The New York Academy of Medicine, and the Swedish Society of Medicine.

The contributors highlight key aspects of the debate concerning health, wealth, and sustainability of economic and social welfare systems in these three wealthy countries, focusing on how health and its social determinants may be affected by the economic recession and on whether a recession widens health inequalities. Their perspectives highlight the potential for research published in journals such as *Social Science & Medicine* to inform the thinking that drives policy and practice with respect to population health and health care in different country settings.

In their introduction to these commentaries, Desai, Barondess, Isacson, and Misselbrook point out: "*These commentaries come at an important time. The global financial crisis has been far-reaching. There will be both short and long term population and sub-group health effects. An evidence-based policy approach for investment in health and the restructuring of health systems to adapt to changing pressures may mitigate some of these impacts both now and in the future. Public and political engagement is vital. There are important lessons to be learnt from history and from each other's experiences, and it is vital that medical practitioners and health policy makers advocate policy changes using this evidence base.*"

Health, wealth and ways of life: What can we learn from the Swedish, US and UK experience?

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David Misselbrook

Dean, Royal Society of Medicine

Introduction

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George A. Kaplan,

Thomas Francis Collegiate Professor Emeritus of Public Health and Professor of Epidemiology Emeritus, University of Michigan

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Marc Suhrcke

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David Stuckler

Lecturer in sociology at Cambridge and Research Fellow at the European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

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Lisa F. Berkman

Director, Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies and Thomas D Cabot Professor of Public Policy, Epidemiology and Global Health and Population, Harvard University

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Mel Bartley

Professor of Medical Sociology, Epidemiology & Public Health, *University College, London.*

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Margareta Kristenson

Professor in Social Medicine, Linköping University, Sweden

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Paula Braveman, MD, MPH

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Gail R. Wilensky

Project HOPE, and formerly Administrator for Health Care Financing Administration in the US government and WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health

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Health systems, health and wealth: the argument for investment applies now more than ever