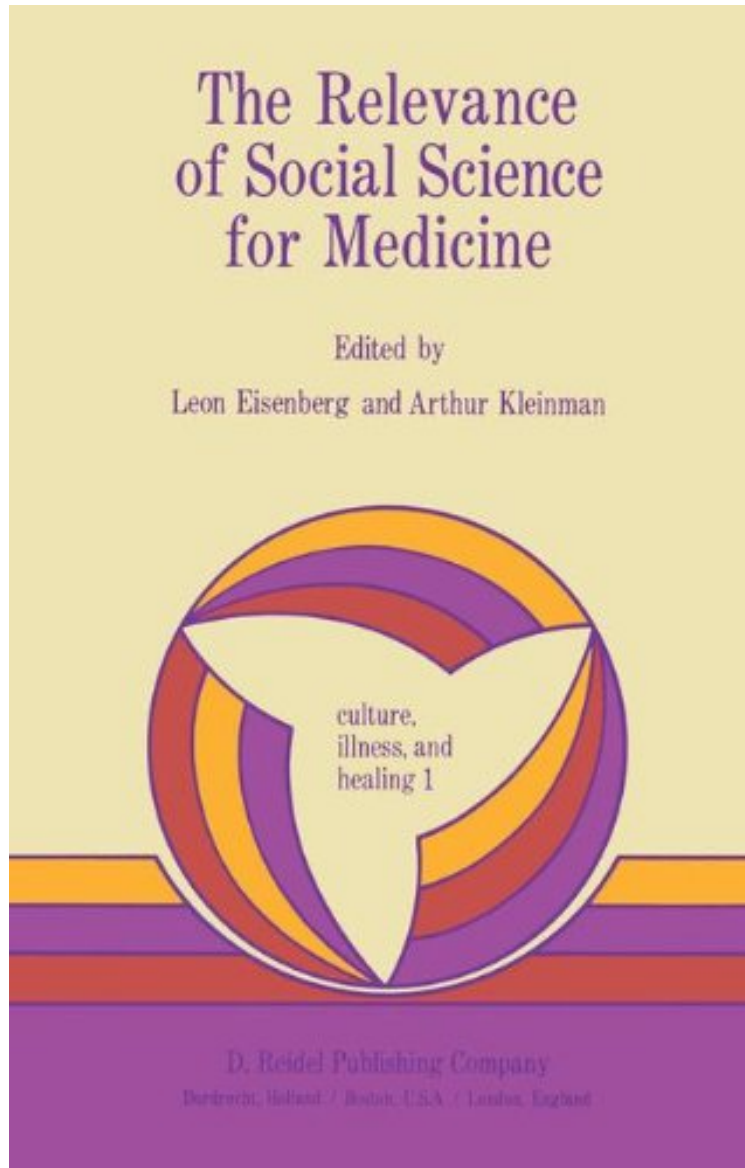


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# The Relevance of Social Science for Medicine (Culture, Illness and Healing)

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## Medicine (Culture, Illness and Healing):

The central purpose of this book is to demonstrate the relevance of social science concepts, and the data derived from empirical research in those sciences, to problems in the clinical practice of medicine. As physicians, we believe that the biomedical sciences have made - and will continue to make - important contributions to better health. At the same time, we are no less firmly persuaded that a comprehensive understanding of health and illness, an understanding which is necessary for effective preventive and therapeutic measures, requires equal attention to the social and cultural determinants of the health status of human populations. The authors who agreed to collaborate with us in the writing of this book were chosen on the basis of their experience in designing and executing research on health and health services and in teaching social science concepts and methods which are applicable to medical practice. We have not attempted to solicit contributions to cover the entire range of the social sciences as they apply to medicine. Rather, we have selected key approaches to illustrate the more salient areas. These include: social epidemiology, health services research, social network analysis, cultural studies of illness behavior, along with chapters on the social labeling of deviance, patterns of therapeutic communication, and economic and political analyses of macro-social factors which influence health outcomes as well as services.