



The mental health of populations

by

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5 Sassoon Road

Abstract:

The global burden of disease has shifted from the infectious diseases of the nineteenth and early twentieth century toward a growing burden of chronic illness. Our understanding of disease causation has commensurately shifted over time. However, as chronic disease has become much more pervasive, it is clear that a focus on isolating individual causes is insufficient to explain more complex disease etiologies. This is perhaps doubly true for mental health. And yet, our lens on mental illness continues to be predominantly an individualistic lens, focusing on single causes of mental illness in individuals. This presentation argues that we need to understand mental health in populations, and the causes of mental health in populations, to the end of improving mental—and physical—health and wellbeing.

Bio-sketch:

Sandro Galea, a physician, epidemiologist, and author, is dean and Robert A. Knox Professor at Boston University School of Public Health. He previously held academic and leadership positions at Columbia University, the University of Michigan, and the New York Academy of Medicine. He has published extensively in the peer-reviewed literature and is a regular contributor to a range of public media. He has been listed as one of the most widely cited scholars in the social science. He is chair of the board of the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health and past president of the Society for Epidemiologic Research and of the Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science. He is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine. Galea has received several lifetime achievement awards. Galea is the author of 18 books. Galea holds a medical degree from the University of Toronto, graduate degrees from Harvard University and Columbia University, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Glasgow.