Book review

Health and care in ageing societies: a new international approach

Liz Lloyd


This book argues that commonly accepted views about ageing, such as the need for containing public expenditure and for promoting healthy and active ageing, flow from an overarching neoliberal agenda and a marketised model of health and care that are exported from high-income countries to the rest of the world. Critiquing the common focus on individual behaviours, the book places socioeconomic determinants of health at the centre of its discussion and draws attention to the vast social inequalities both within and across countries globally that underlie many trends in health and ageing. The author points out that an agenda based on human rights will remain powerless when conceptualised separately from the political agenda of how to allocate resources. In line with a feminist ethic of care, the book argues that the need to care should not be understood as individual failure, but rather as an inherent characteristic of the human condition, while health should be conceptualised broadly and positively, as more than the absence of disease. The book covers an impressive range of disciplines and, while necessarily sometimes a little superficial (such as in its discussion of globalization or DALYs), it provides an important critical perspective on dominant discourses and policies on ageing.

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