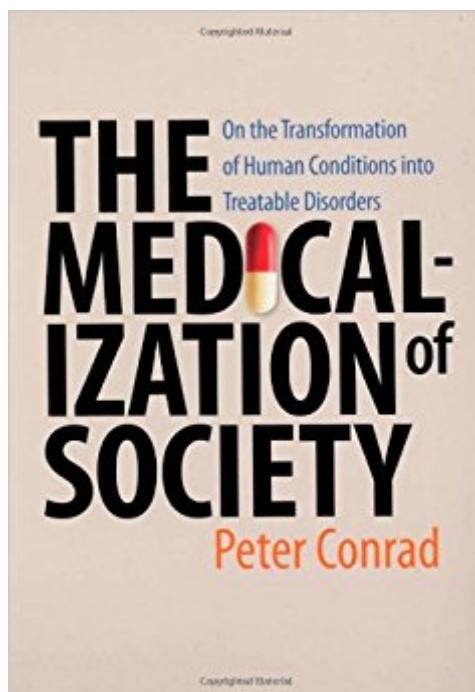


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The Medicalization Of Society: On The Transformation Of Human Conditions Into Treatable Disorders



Synopsis

Over the past half-century, the social terrain of health and illness has been transformed. What were once considered normal human events and common human problems—birth, aging, menopause, alcoholism, and obesity—are now viewed as medical conditions. For better or worse, medicine increasingly permeates aspects of daily life. Building on more than three decades of research, Peter Conrad explores the changing forces behind this trend with case studies of short stature, social anxiety, "male menopause," erectile dysfunction, adult ADHD, and sexual orientation. He examines the emergence of and changes in medicalization, the consequences of the expanding medical domain, and the implications for health and society. He finds in recent developments—such as the growing number of possible diagnoses and biomedical enhancements—the future direction of medicalization. Conrad contends that the impact of medical professionals on medicalization has diminished. Instead, the pharmaceutical and biotechnical industries, insurance companies and HMOs, and the patient as consumer have become the major forces promoting medicalization. This thought-provoking study offers valuable insight into not only how medicalization got to this point but also how it may continue to evolve.

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"An accessible yet nuanced introduction to a fascinating and important topic. Readers do not need any background in medicine or academic sociology to appreciate Conrad's inquiry, and the experience of living in the 21st century United States is enough to understand what he's talking

about." (Benjamin J. Lovett *Metapsychology*) "Conrad's fine work investigates and illuminates this baleful phenomenon." (A. Mark Clarfield, MD, FRCPC *JAMA*) "This is an enjoyable and thought-provoking book." (H. Russell Searight *PsycCRITIQUES*) "The text is useful, especially for medical students." (Choice) "Recommended reading for practicing physicians, or better yet, for physicians in training. The so-called gatekeepers need to be reminded (or initially trained to understand) that reductionist medical perspectives are problematic and that the best solutions account for the social complexity that is inherent in the human condition." (Michael Fendrich, Ph.D. *New England Journal of Medicine*) "An invaluable synopsis of 30 years' scholarship... Clearly written and presented so that it should be accessible to students in both sociology and health studies... An immense contribution to medical sociology." (Robert Dingwall Society) "Conrad's accomplishment is significant. The *Medicalization of Society* is simply the most lucid treatise on the patterns and consequences of medicalization to date. It is also a much needed warning about the darker side of medicalization." (Regina Smardon *Culture*) "From masculinity to underperformance, from the surge in psychotropic drugs for children to the rise of adult ADHD and more, Peter Conrad takes readers on a welcome and necessary tour of the spread of medicalization. His cogent analysis of changing objects of knowledge and transformed identity is an essential guide to shifting ideas about normal and pathological, health and disease." (Sharon Kaufman, University of California, San Francisco) "A lucid overview of a complex field that astutely recounts and analyzes the latest twists and turns in the long saga of our love/hate relationship with the health professions, the pharmaceutical industry, and the corporate organization of health care. I prescribe this book for anyone who has ever seen a doctor or popped a pill." (Steven Epstein, author of *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge*) "Peter Conrad is one of the leading scholars of medicalization today. He mines a deep, rich vein of modern American society; his efforts yield pure sociological gold. This engaging and comprehensive book will endure not only as the intellectual foundation on which future generations of sociologists will build but also as a shining exemplar of lucid theory and the highest sociological craft." (Elizabeth Armstrong, Princeton University) "No one in America brings more insight to the thorny issue of medicalization than Peter Conrad. The *Medicalization of Society* is a deeply impressive summation of more than thirty years of work." (Carl Elliott, University of Minnesota, author of *Better Than Well: American Medicine Meets the American Dream*) "This is an extremely interesting, timely and thought-provoking book, which will have a wide appeal amongst academics. Medical sociologists will welcome the opportunity to see Conrad's various writings brought together in one volume, and will appreciate the way he has revisited and updated his own work." (Susie Scott *Health Sociology Review*) "The issues raised by this monograph are important,

complex, and increasingly relevant for all of us who live in the modern world." (S. Elizabeth Whitmore Themelios)"Peter Conradâ™s book is largely comprised of a series of case studies used to illustrate the changing nature of medicalization... With his 30-year history of studying this topic, Conrad is just the right person to take on the task, and this book represents a significant contribution to the area." (Heather Hartley Contemporary Sociology)"Peter Conrad is the doyen of studies in medicalization. From his work on hyperactivity in the 1970s to his more recent research on 'genitization' Conrad has documented the twists and turns of medical involvement in an ever increasing range of human problems. In this new book he does more than offer a reprise of his work or of the field. Rather, he sets out an illustrated framework for understanding and studying medicalization, with a view to future possible developments as well as current debates." (Mike Bury Sociology of Health and Illness)"This short, tightly written, highly readable book deals with issues, often previously regarded as normal aging or personality flaws, that have moved under the domain of medicine... An important book that will find many readers among the general public as well as among physicians... highly recommended as required reading for medical school courses." (Charles V. Ford Journal of Clinical Psychiatry)

Peter Conrad is the Harry Coplan Professor of Social Sciences at Brandeis University. He is the coauthor of *Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness* and coeditor of *The Double-Edged Helix*, also published by Johns Hopkins.

This book was one of the couple of books my professor for bio ethics recommended to read. I really enjoyed this book. It was pretty easy to understand and it wasn't too dry (like most informative books). I have actually recommended to a few of my friends to read as well. I like how it really gives in depth examples of medicalization in todays society and gives a great explanation of how everything influences this process.

Everyone should read this book because we are all at risk for being improperly diagnosed and prescribed medicine and treatment we do not need.

excelente

This was an easy and diverse read. I thought it was well written and brought meaningful discussion to the topics of medicalization, gender, sex, and feminism,

Ã A very good general outline of medicalization as social problem. Gives a basis understanding for analyses of the role of the pharmaceutic industri and lobby grops.

Fast, punctual service. Will be continuing service with this company. Will recommend to others for future book purchases and other transactions.

This book was required reading for a graduate Sociology course in Health and Medicine. This is an easy read full of interesting factoids and generally good ideas. I didn't mind having to analyze it for class. Not what I expected, honestly :)

This book is very unique. It shows how knowing rules gives you little power. It demonstrates to the reader reality of life: how the processes are done in US so the small group could misuse the system. The book explores how ignoring historical values the small group of people decides which of the historically cultural values are old and which one should be kept for their own interest. This book should be used as a textbook in universities. The book is uncovering too much truth, therefore it could meet the obstacles from the professors, instructors, administration etc. The medicalization and the related social and political process moves the society and its course of development. Therefore, sharing this book with students and public, for someone could mean losing the power.

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