

Cities and Health Book Review

Healthy Urbanism – Designing and Planning Equitable, Sustainable and Inclusive Places

Helen Pineo

Healthy Urbanism – Designing and planning equitable, sustainable and inclusive places, by Helen Pineo. Published by Palgrave Macmillan in the Planning, Environment and Cities series in 2022. Series editors are Yvonne Rydin and Ben Clifford, Bartlett School of Planning, University College London, London, UK. The book is 290 pages in length, with 40 figures and 22 tables. ISBN: 978-981-16-9646-6. ISBN: 978-981-16-9647-3 (eBook). GBP: £34.99 Paperback. GBP: £27.99 EBook.

‘Healthy Urbanism – Designing and planning equitable, sustainable and inclusive places’ is published by Palgrave Macmillan in the Planning, Environment and Cities Series. The series is aimed at students and practitioners of planning and related professions, including housing and architecture, politics, geography and urban studies, but this book in particular would be just as relevant to public health professionals.

Approaches to healthy urbanism have never been more important, given the growing global health challenges associated with urbanisation and urban living; our understanding and appreciation of how the built environment impacts on both communicable and non-communicable diseases has grown and necessitates action. But there are huge challenges in

ensuring that urban centres promote rather than degrade the mental and physical health of inhabitants. This book seeks to address a range of challenges, aiming to 'define and describe healthy urbanism as an approach to design and planning that unites human health and wellbeing with the sustainability of environmental systems'.

The author, Helen Pineo, is currently an Associate Professor in the Healthy and Sustainable Cities in the Bartlett School of the Built Environment at University College London, UK. The book is the product of the author's experience and knowledge from over a decade working in the area, and much of the content centres on her empirical research and the development of the THRIVES (Towards Healthy uRbanism: Inclusive, Equitable, Sustainable) framework. The framework illustrates health at three levels (local, ecosystem and planetary), across five geographical areas (region, city, district, neighbourhood, and building) and a range of actions to improve the urban realm. Three cross-cutting considerations – sustainable, inclusive and equitable – run through actions across the health and geographical levels.

The book is structured into nine chapters, and begins with an introduction to healthy urbanism, outlining models of health and wellbeing, global population trends and the some particular health challenges in cities. Chapter two then examines the shifting priorities for healthy places, beginning with the historical context of health and place, including health in ancient cities, and the rise of planning and other actions on the built environment as a key means of improving the health of urban populations.

Following this background, the author considers the THRIVES framework in detail, linking this to systems thinking for urban health and the need to reframe healthy urbanism in response

to developing knowledge and understanding of how urban centres impact on health. Subsequent chapters examine ecosystem health and local health at both the neighbourhood and building scales.

Following a chapter exploring issues regarding the practising of healthy urbanism, Pineo looks towards the future, concluding that 'healthy urbanism should be pursued in transdisciplinary teams who are not only diverse in disciplines and sectors but also in terms of their personal characteristics and life experiences'.

The author makes good use of case studies from across the world throughout the book, ensuring that the now-often described population health impacts of unhealthy urban planning is more than balanced with a focus on design and planning solutions. Alongside the THRIVES framework, the practical approach in the book should offer inspiration for those working towards healthier and more sustainable urban places and spaces. The book is recommended for the wide range of professionals across the globe who can and should be working together to achieve healthy urbanism.

591 words.

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