

Librería
Bonilla y Asociados
desde 1950



Título:

Autor:

Precio: \$221.00

Editorial:

Año: 2004

Tema:

Edición: 1ª

Sinopsis

ISBN: 9780805078541

With 30 years of research and a catchy name for his theory, epidemiologist Marmot gives a wake-up call to those of us in the wealthy industrialized world who think our social status has no impact on our health: whether you look at wealth, education, upbringing or job, health steadily worsens as one descends the social ladder, even within the upper and middle classes. Beyond a simple explanation of how the deprivation of extreme poverty leads to disease, Marmot shows that life expectancy declines gradually from the upper crust to the impoverished. The odds are that your boss will live longer than you and that Donald Trump will outlive us all. Marmot bases his conclusions on his study of British civil servants, but backs up his theory at every turn with mountains of other research, from experiments on rhesus monkeys to studies of cigarette factory workers in India. For a book based on statistics, the text contains only a few graphs, but Marmot still provides a comprehensive overview of the current understanding of how our health depends on the society around us, and particularly on the sense of autonomy and control one has over one's life. As an adviser to the World Health Organization, Marmot has had the opportunity to make policy recommendations based on his theory. The Status Syndrome may not be a page-turner, but it will make readers look at the rat race in a whole new way.

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