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World Health Organization

Comparative Quantification of Health Risks

Global and Regional Burden of Disease Attributable to Selected Major Risk Factors



Book

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During the last quarter of the twentieth century, a number of works have addressed both the methodological and empirical aspects of populationwide impacts of major causes of diseases. This gradual establishment of “risk assessment” or “risk quantification” has been driven partly by the academic curiosity of individual researchers and partly by the demands of regulatory agencies and public policy for better quantitative evidence on the health implications of certain risk exposures. These efforts nonetheless have generally been within the disciplinary and methodological traditions of individual risk factors and in a limited number of settings. As a result, the criteria for evaluating scientific evidence have varied greatly across risk factors resulting in lack of comparability across risk factors.

This book provides a comprehensive assessment of the scientific evidence on prevalence and hazards, and the resulting health effects, of a range of exposures that are known to be hazardous to human health, including childhood and maternal undernutrition, nutritional and physiological risk factors for adult health, addictive substances, sexual and reproductive health, and risks in the physical environments of households and communities, as well as among workers. This book is the culmination of over 3 years of scientific enquiry and data collection, collectively known as the Comparative Risk Assessment (CRA) project, involving over 100 scientists, applying a common analytical framework and methods to ensure greater consistency and comparability in using and evaluating scientific evidence across risks.

As a result, our understanding of the comparative extent of disease burden caused by various exposures worldwide has advanced, and key areas of scientific enquiry to better inform policy needs to reduce risks have been elucidated. As public health researchers and practitioners evaluate policy alternatives for improving population health, this book not only demonstrates the enormous potential for disease prevention, but also provides a fundamental reference for the scientific evidence on some of the most important global risks to health.

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A CD-ROM, which contains the 2 paper volumes and the Annex tables is also available. The CD-ROM is designed for Windows 98 and above and Internet Explorer (version 4.5 and above). The CD-ROM content can be opened and navigated by any browser.

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