

Manning, N. and Tikhonova, N. (eds) 2009: *Health and Health Care in the New Russia*. Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited. 314 pp, £65 includes bibliographical reference and index. ISBN: 978-0-7546-7427-6 (hardcover).

Health and Health Care in the New Russia is the third of a trilogy dedicated to the study of the impact of the dramatic changes in post-communist Russia on the wellbeing of its population.

The first two companion volumes of the trilogy are focused on socio-economic aspects such as poverty, isolation, social exclusion, work and welfare and take a longitudinal quantitative perspective of these issues. This third volume combines qualitative and epidemiological approaches to provide a unique opportunity to explore wellbeing of householders in the situation of continuous social and economic instability and uncertainty.

The book is in three sections and commences with a thoughtful overview of social policy and health crisis in the new Russia. The first section – *Health Beliefs in the New Russia* – considers the dynamics of health of the Russian population during the transition period and focuses on measuring and understanding health that is relevant to professionals and policy makers.

The second section – *Health and Social Structure* – discusses the impact of social and economic problems such as social inequalities, poverty and unemployment on the health of the population, whereas the third section – *Health and Social Action* – focuses on access to healthcare, self-care

and illness prevention, the influence of gender on health behavior and attitudes towards work and healthcare.

The lived experiences of 10 Russian householders over a 10-year period provides a vivid account of their hopes and fears in a period of rapid change and inequalities.

The content of this high-quality volume stimulates interest and provides many issues for reflection. The technical aspects of the book, for example, the layout, tables and figures, are user-friendly and informative.

The findings show that health conditions of the Russian population decreased significantly in the post-Soviet period, a powerful indicator of which being a decrease in life expectancy of Russian men. The explanation is complex and involves multi-factorial issues impacting on health such as poverty, unemployment, disabilities, social inequalities and exclusion. The authors refer to other key factors such as socio-cultural issues and inertia of the authoritarian political system.

To conclude, the volume reflects a very interesting type of research that gives the reader an opportunity to gain insight into health, politics and factors influencing health in the post-Soviet Russia.

Darejan Jana Javakhishvili
Mental Health Projects Department
Global Initiative in Psychiatry
Tbilisi, Georgia
Email: jjavakhishvili@global-org.ge