

Social Networks and Health: Models, Methods, and Applications

By Thomas W. Valente

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Relationships and the pattern of relationships have a large and varied influence on both individual and group action. The fundamental distinction of social network analysis research is that relationships are of paramount importance in explaining behavior. Because of this, social network analysis offers many exciting tools and techniques for research and practice in a wide variety of medical and public health situations including organizational improvements, understanding risk behaviors, coordinating coalitions, and the delivery of health care services.

This book provides an introduction to the major theories, methods, models, and findings of social network analysis research and application. In three sections, it presents a comprehensive overview of the topic; first in a survey of its historical and theoretical foundations, then in practical descriptions of the variety of methods currently in use, and finally in a discussion of its specific applications for behavior change in a public health context. Throughout, the text has been kept clear, concise, and comprehensible, with short mathematical formulas for some key indicators or concepts. Researchers and students alike will find it an invaluable resource for understanding and implementing social network analysis in their own practice.

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Review

"It is a comprehensive introduction to a field that may not be well known to the broader epidemiologic community but could go a long way to making an impact upon researchers if they take the opportunity to see how this approach can be used in a variety of fields. The author has produced a very readable text on an issue of growing importance in epidemiology and public health more generally." --*American Journal of Epidemiology*

"In Social Networks and Health, Valente demonstrates how the usefulness of the approach can reach far beyond its current application in medicine and public health... As Valente's book indicates, the confluence of widespread interest, a relatively established research "canon," and recent advances in the field has laid the grounds for the network approach to make important contributions to science, in health and writ large, in the coming years." --*Science*

"The book is a good read-well written, well organized, and valuable to both graduate students and the casual reader...There is much to learn about networking for the betterment of communal existence, and Social Networks and Health is a good start. " -- JAMA

"Valente's contribution stands out... as an exceptionally accessible introduction oriented towards students of public health and will certainly become a classic resource for advanced undergraduate courses and graduate seminars in this field." --*Contemporary Sociology*

About the Author

Thomas W. Valente is a Professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California.

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