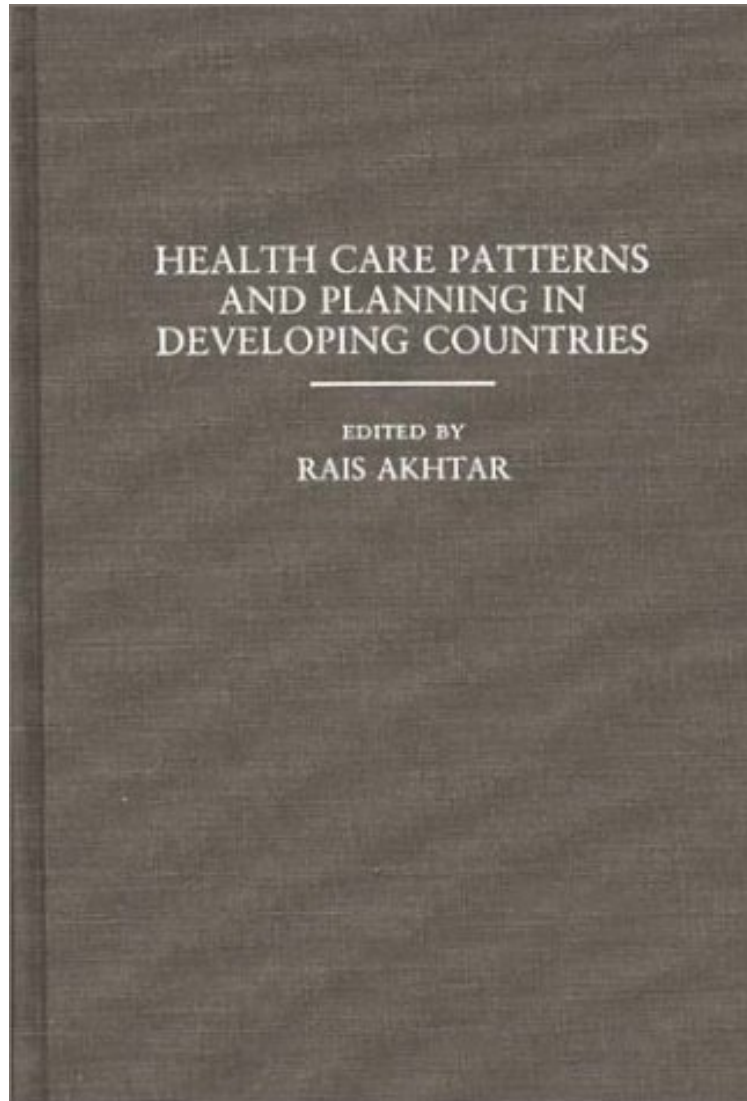


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In the Third World, as Rais Akhtar notes in his introduction, the great majority of people suffer excess mortality and morbidity, while in contrast the affluent enjoy a health status similar to that of most people in developed countries.

This collection of articles focuses on the study of the spatial organization of health care in the Third World, its levels of inequality, and the socio-economic and political forces that govern health care in different countries. It discusses the need for realistic health care planning, and offers some directions that countries might take to achieve this end. Unlike other books that deal with minimizing imbalances in health care delivery, this work approaches the problem empirically, citing numerous investigative studies conducted in Asian, African, and South American countries. These studies, rather than providing theories for health care improvements, offer evidence of what has been attempted and what has been achieved, allowing for a comparison of the way in which different Third World countries are trying to meet this crisis. Although systems cannot simply be transferred from one cultural context to another, this work can provide an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of various combinations of health care types. It will be an important reference for courses in health care management, epidemiology, and political and social issues in the Third World, as well as a valuable addition to academic and public libraries.

About the Author RAIS AKHTAR is Head of the Department of Geography and Regional Development at the University of Kashmir in Srinagar, India, and is currently a member of the International Geographical Union Commission on Health and Development .