
Health and society

Dear readers

*In this issue of SPM, International Journal of Public Health you will find the first of two consecutive Forum contributions, both presenting basic ideas about “health and society”. Excerpts from recent interviews with two of the most renowned public health experts of the second half of the 20th century, **Sol Levine** and **Jonathan Mann**, are illustrative. Their thinking about health and its meaning in society reads as an intriguing combination of deeply personal accounts and professional expertise of the highest standard. As such, they are prone to provoke new ideas and directions for the current public health discourse. Both scholars look at basic public health issues in a combination of distinctive interdisciplinary thinking and personal as well as cultural sensitivity. Their insight not only provides fascinating reading but may also provide guidance for conceptual work and new visions for public health.*

*At SPM, we are particularly grateful to **Anne Brunner** (Germany) for making this unique material available to us. She has conducted the interviews and produced the excerpts, that provided the basis for the two publications. As has become a tradition at SPM, we have invited scholars from European and other countries to comment on those interviews and add their own ideas that relate to the issues addressed therein.*

*You will find comments by **Jack Geiger**, **Ichiro Kawachi**, **Dieter Koch-Weser**, **Fred Paccaud**, **Johannes Siegrist**, and **Paolo Toniolo**. We hope that these two excerpts, together with the commentaries, will serve as a stimulus for addressing issues focused at the heart of the matter of public health, something that seems increasingly scarce in a period that finds public health sciences seemingly more and more concerned with measurement rather than substantive thinking.*

Thomas Abel and Alfredo Morabia