

Title	Psychosocial Stress : Trends in Theory and Research
Author	James A. Wells
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Brief Introduction	<p>The editor recruited five colleagues to help him in this volume. Four have written chapters summarizing the literature pertaining to four themes of psychosocial stress research: role strains (reviewed by Pearlin), life events (Thoits), social support (Turner), and coping (Menaghan). Kaplan himself wrote a chapter synthesizing a sociological theory of psychosocial stress, and the volume is completed by a chapter on methodological issues by Kessler.</p> <p>It should be emphasized that this is a review of trends in sociological theory and research into psychosocial stress. None of the authors and a minority of their citations represent approaches to psychosocial stress used in psychiatry, epidemiology, psychosomatic medicine, and kindred disciplines. The reviews generally are not concerned with physical disorders, diagnostic criteria, or epidemiological models; the authors tend to limit their investigations to the etiological relationship between psychosocial stress and psychological distress. The antecedents of psychosocial stress are largely ignored (Menaghan's paper excepted) as are considerations of the effect of psychosocial stress on the course and treatment of psychological disorders. Finally, the emphasis is on community surveys of psychosocial stress; the authors give only passing attention to clinical studies, studies of particular subpopulations, or the specialized literatures of marital and occupational stress.</p> <p>Kaplan has dodged the usual criticisms of edited volumes by limiting the number of contributors and, somewhat, the scope of their contributions. The authors have achieved a consistency of approach that results in a coherent volume and attests to the editor's organizational skills. Nonetheless, there are blemishes on this performance. Pearlin doesn't review the literature so much as he reviews his own research, and this is a major disappointment. An enormous literature on role strain, and other chronically stressful</p>