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This is one of the important conclusions drawn by Professor Jan Sundin and Associate Professor Sam Willner in this book, which traces the development of Swedish public health from 1750 to the present day against the backdrop of major societal change.

Internationally speaking, the Swedish population enjoys a high health status and many have asked how this has been achieved. Among the historical roots we find, for instance, good statistics since 1749, trustful cooperation between agents of health and local communities, restrictive alcohol policy, anti-tobacco campaigns and almost 200 years without the devastation of war. However, there is no denying that increased living standards due to universal welfare policy strategies, including social security, high educational standard, regional and housing subsidies and greater employment among both women and men, appear to have been equally or even more important.

Historical lessons cannot be transferred uncritically from one country to another country. However, differences and similarities in appropriate contexts can increase our understanding of relations between health and society. We hope that this book will be useful for policy comparisons and in the training of public health policy-makers, researchers, administrators and practitioners.

Jan Sundin is a historian and Professor of Health and Society at Tema Health and Society, Linköping University. Sam Willner is a historian and Associate Professor of Health and Society at the same department.
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