



Chasing Polio in Pakistan: Why the World's Largest Public Health Initiative May Fail

Svea Closser

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The number of global polio cases has fallen dramatically and eradication is within sight, but despite extraordinary efforts, polio retains its grip in a few areas. Anthropologist Svea Closser follows the trajectory of the polio eradication effort in Pakistan, one of the last four countries in the world with endemic polio. Journeying from vaccination campaigns in rural Pakistan to the center of global health decision making at the World Health Organization in Geneva, the author explores the historical and cultural underpinnings of eradication as a public health strategy, and reveals the culture of optimism that characterizes—and sometimes cripples—global health institutions.

With a keen ethnographic eye, Closser describes the complex power negotiations that underlie the eradication effort at every level, tracking techniques of resistance employed by district health workers and state governments alike. This book offers an analysis of local politics, social relations, and global political economy in the implementation of a worldwide public health effort, with broad implications for understanding what is possible in global health, now and for the future.

This book is the recipient of the annual Norman L. and Roselea J. Goldberg Prize for the best project in the area of medicine.

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