

# Social medicine in Latin America: Productivity and dangers facing the major national groups

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There is little knowledge about Latin American social medicine in the English-speaking world. Social medicine groups exist in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, and Mexico.

Dictatorships have created political and economic conditions which are more adverse in some countries than others; in certain instances, practitioners of social medicine have faced unemployment, arrest, torture, exile, and death. Social medicine groups have focused on the social determinants of illness and early death, the effects of social policies such as privatisation and public sector cutbacks, occupational and environmental causes of illness, critical epidemiology, mental health effects of political trauma, the impact of gender, and collaborations with local communities, labour organisations, and indigenous people. The groups' achievements and financial survival have varied, depending partly on the national context. Active professional associations have developed, both nationally and internationally.