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## Evolution of Medical Geography

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### Abstract:

Health is not merely absence of disease or infirmity; it is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. In fact, health is dynamic equilibrium between man and his environment. A commission on medical geography was made by international Geographical Union (IGU) and its report was discussed at IGU congress in Washington in 1952. Since then the analysis of health and disease through man-environment relationships has attracted the attention of geographers to work in medical geography. In this context, present article seeks to analyse the development, purpose and field of medical geography. It also attempts to analyse environmental control of disease and susceptibility and prospects of medical geography in India. Finally, it concludes that geographers can make major contributions to help reduce suffering of human health and increasing longevity if they are able to establish causal links between specific disease and environment.

**Keywords:** Medical Geography

### Introduction:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely absence of disease or infirmity. It is evident from the definition that there is an extension of elements of health as against sickness. In the modern concept, disease is looked as maladjustment in the delicate balance between man and environment and health as a dynamic equilibrium between them (Park 1994). Disease can't arise without the convergence at a particular point in time and space of two orders of factors: environmental stimulus and response of the tissues. They vary with the locational attributes. In essence, health may be a function, not only of medical care but also of the integrated development of society, natural, and man-made environment. Diseases aren't uniformly distributed over the surface of the world. When a scientific study is formed about the spatial distribution of diseases within which human-being lives in relation to the environment, we approach the sector of medical geography. Realizing the importance of medical geography, the International Geographical Union (IGU) constituted a commission on medical geography and its report was discussed at IGU congress in Washington in 1952. The Commission defined medical geography because the study of geographical factors concerned with cause and effect of health and disease. Since then the analysis of health and disease through man-environment relationships has attracted the attention of geographers to work in medical geography and has emerged as a specialized branch of geography. Levels of health and disease vary by places and over time. Medical geography has to reflect on changing understanding of diseases through time. Like places, diseases (and health) aren't fixed realities but are situated and socially produced especially historical, social, economic, cultural and political contexts (Smith 2005). At the present, there's a growing awareness of the importance and understanding of geographical aspects of human health and diseases. This paper aims at tracing out the historical development, purposes and field of medical geography.

### Development of Medical Geography: