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A qualitative research: how was the objectives and principles of public health tackled in the public health coursebook by Julius Hirsch and Muhiddin Erel?

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Merve Guven, Fatma Yagmur Evcil and Fuat Ince were responsible for the original draft writing, reviewing, editing, and supervision; Fuat Ince was responsible for methodology.
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Abstract
Objective: We aimed to assess the subject of "Purpose and Principles of Public Health" in the work titled "Public Health Coursebook" dated 1938, share the information we obtained and compare it with today's information. **Methods:** Multiple document analysis method in qualitative research was used to design the study. First of all, original edition of the *Public Health Coursebook* was purchased from a website with rare books. The book was thoroughly examined and the "Purpose and Principles of Hygiene (Public Health)" part in the first volume was evaluated. The information in the book was compared with today's information according to the methodology of history of medicine. Secondly, the Republic Archive Catalog of the Turkish Presidency of the Republic of Turkiye State Archives was scanned. **Results:** After the University Reform movement in Turkiye in 1933, the Faculty of Medicine was established at Istanbul University. In the same period, Turkiye embraced many scientists who fled abroad due to Nazi regime. One of them, Julius Hirsch, was appointed as the head of Hygiene Institute, and Turkish physician Muhiddin Erel became his assistant. The Purpose and Principles of Public Health are discussed in the first volume of the Hygiene Textbook, which they both prepared together. The book, defines public health as "the science of protecting and maintaining health". Public health has been handled with a holistic approach. The aim of measures to be taken regarding public health is explained as the prevention of untimely death, prevention of diseases and protection of the ability to work even in advanced ages. It has been specifically stated that the common goal is to protect public health and ensure the continuity of health despite the practices that vary by time, place and cultures. The documents in the State Archives are about the admission of immigrant scientists to Turkiye, Hirsch's Turkish citizenship and appointments. **Conclusion:** Despite all this time, it has been observed that the issues mentioned in the study largely overlap with the public health aspect of medicine and today's perspective. We think that it is important to bring similar books to literature by evaluating them with field experts.

Keywords: Julius Hirsch; Muhiddin Erel; public health; hygiene

Background

Ten years after the declaration of the Republic of Turkiye in 1923, a very important change was made in the higher education system. Based on the report prepared by a Swiss professor of education, Albert Malche, University Reform was introduced upon the request of the Turkish government. According to this reform, the university (Darulfunun) that was established as an institution of higher education in 1863 during the period of Ottoman Empire was abolished due to its insufficiency and Istanbul University was established on the August 1 instead [1].

Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), a founder of Republic of Turkiye, personally followed that report and the School of Medicine was included in that new university as a faculty upon the directive of Mustafa Kemal [2]. Faculties of law, arts and science at Istanbul University used the German university model as well [3]. Apart from the instructors of Darulfunun, two ways were determined to complete the lacking and inadequate instructor staff of university. One of these was to bring academicians from abroad and the other was to employ Turkish academicians who completed their education abroad [4].

In the same years, Europe experienced very important political developments. In Germany, the Nazi regime came to power and anguished days started for the Jews and opponents [5]. It became difficult for Jewish scientists to do their jobs, let alone run their daily life and even survive. Philipp Schwartz, a professor of pathology, was one of the first victims of Nazi persecutions and initiated a process that would change lives of those people after he was informed about University Reform in Turkiye [6].

Schwartz founded the "Emergency Association for German Scientists Abroad" in Switzerland and initiated his efforts to send Jewish scientists to Turkiye by means of that association. Albert Einstein wrote a letter to Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic on September 17, 1933 before he emigrated to the United States of America (Figure 1). However, there is some debate on whether such a letter existed or whether Einstein himself wrote it. If we leave these discussions aside, image of first page of the letter in the Republic Archive of Turkish Presidency State Archivesis presented below. In the letter, Einstein urged the admission of forty professors and physicians who had to leave Germany at that time to Turkiye [7].

Thanks to Schwartz's initiatives, scientists who escaped from the Nazi regime could go to Turkiye. The number of people who took shelter in Turkiye reached a thousand in time. Although most of them were Jewish, some of them were Germans who did not support the Nazi regime [8]. Turkiye embraced not only the scientists and physicians but also their families. Moreover, the assistants and technicians of the scientists, instructors who could help them and qualified personnel were also allowed to come to Turkiye [9].

An important part of scientists who escaped from Nazi Germany and Nazi-occupied countries and took shelter in Turkiye were the members of medicine. These physicians including many important names from Philipp Schwartz (pathology) to Erich Frank (internal medicine) and Rudolf Nissen (general surgery) and other scientists who worked in fields of health sciences were employed at both Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine and in health institutions that started to open in Ankara [10].

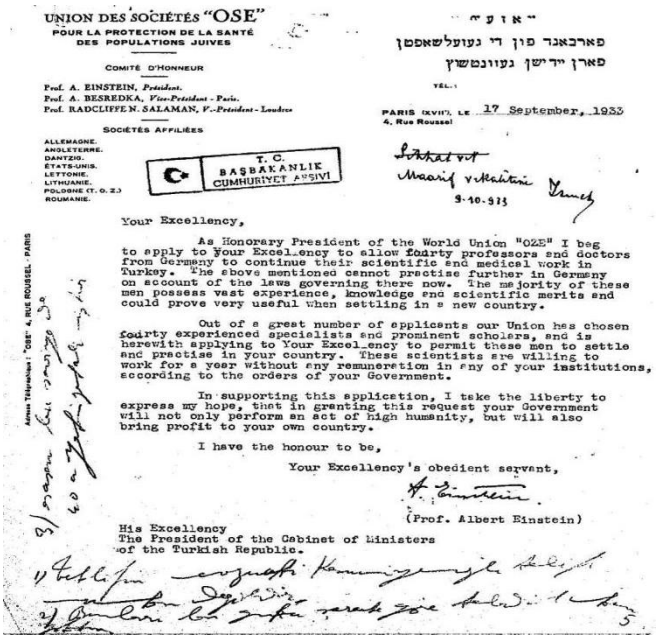
One of the first refugee physicians who came to Turkiye in 1933 was Jewish German Distinguished Professor Julius Hirsch. He came to Turkiye with his family. He became the director of the Institute of Hygiene at Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine. Hirsch, a worldwide known authority in his own field, applied to be a Turkish citizen on the July 1, 1939. His demand was put into process on the August 4, 1945 [11].

Both Hirsch and his wife Emma and his daughter Renate were admitted to Turkish citizenship with the Government Decree on no. 3/4970 November 9, 1946 (Figure 2). The admission was approved by Turkish President Ismet Inonu.

His scientific studies in the institute were mostly about chemical physiology of bacterial proliferation, chemotherapy, compound of foods, and food hygiene [12].

Dr. Muhiddin (Erel) became the assistant of Hirsch at the Institute of Hygiene. Erel who was promoted as an associate professor with University Reform, studied at the Hamburg Institute of Hygiene in Germany between 1929 and 1932. He became a professor in 1943 and the director of Institute of Hygiene after Hirsch left Turkiye at the end of 1948 [13]. Erel was appointed as a distinguished professor on December 23, 1950 (Figure 3) [14].

Dr. Erel who knew German both worked as a translator of Julius Hirsch in lectures and wrote books including theoretical and practical information on hygiene courses. Books written by Hirsch and Erel together were as follows: *Notes from the Course of Public Health* (1935), *Practice of Public Health, Public Health Examination Methods Selected for Medical Students* (1937), *Public Health Coursebook I* (1938), *Public Health Coursebook II* (1940), *Social Public Health Conferences (1939/40) and second edition of the Practice of Public Health* (1942).


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T. C. BAŞBAKANLIK CUMHURİYET ARŞİVİ

PARIS (XVII^e), LE 17 September, 1933
4, Rue Roussel

Your Excellency,

As Honorary President of the World Union "OZE" I beg to apply to your Excellency to allow fourty professors and doctors from Germany to continue their scientific and medical work in Turkey. The above mentioned cannot practise further in Germany on account of the laws governing there now. The majority of these men possess vast experience, knowledge and scientific merits and could prove very useful when settling in a new country.

Out of a great number of applicants our Union has chosen fourty experienced specialists and prominent scholars, and is herewith applying to Your Excellency to permit these men to settle and practise in your country. These scientists are willing to work for a year without any remuneration in any of your institutions, according to the orders of your Government.

In supporting this application, I take the liberty to express my hope, that in granting this request your Government will not only perform an act of high humanity, but will also bring profit to your own country.

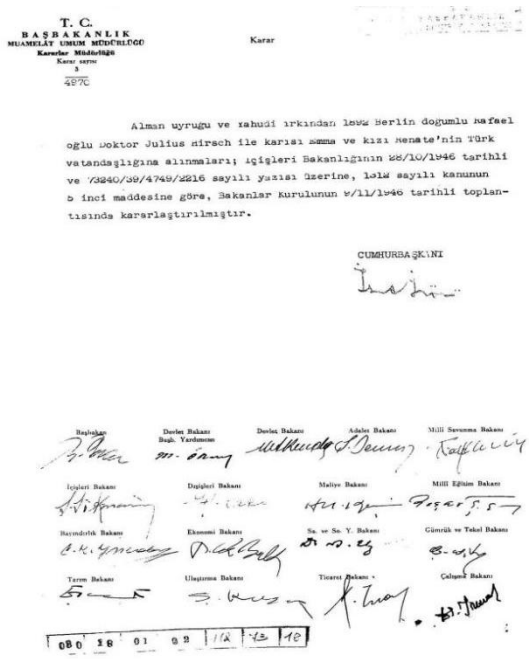
I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

(Prof. Albert Einstein)

His Excellency
The President of the Cabinet of Ministers
of the Turkish Republic.

Figure 1 Eintein's letter dated 17th of September 1933 [7]


T. C.
BAŞBAKANLIK
MUAMELÂT UMUM MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
Kararlar Müdürlüğü

Karar

4970

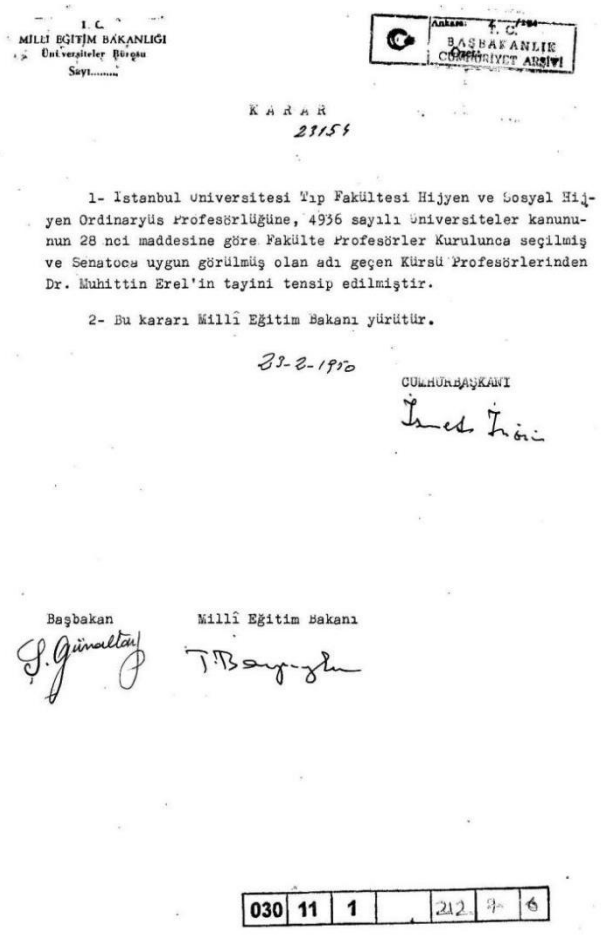
Alman uyruğu ve Yahudi ırkından olup Berlin doğumlu Rafael oğlu doktor Julius Hirsch ile karısı Emma ve kızı Renate'nin Türk vatandaşlığına alınmaları; İçişleri Bakanlığının 28/10/1946 tarihli ve 73240/39/4748/2816 sayılı yazısı üzerine, 1934 sayılı kanunun 5 inci maddesine göre, Bakanlar Kurulunun 9/11/1946 tarihli toplantısında kararlaştırılmıştır.

CUMHURBAŞKANI

Başbakan | Devlet Bakanı | Devlet Bakanı | Adalet Bakanı | Milli Savunma Bakanı
Başb. Yardımcısı
İçişleri Bakanı | Dışişleri Bakanı | Maliye Bakanı | Milli Eğitim Bakanı
Bayındırlık Bakanı | Ekonomi Bakanı | Sa. ve So. Y. Bakanı | Gümrük ve Tekel Bakanı
Tarım Bakanı | Ulaştırma Bakanı | Ticaret Bakanı | Çalışma Bakanı

080 18 01 02 112 43 10

Figure 2 Decree no. 3/4970 on the 9th of November 1946 [12]



T. C.
MİLLÎ EĞİTİM BAKANLIĞI
Üniversiteler Bürosu
Sayı.....

T. C.
BAŞBAKANLIK
CUMHURİYET ARŞİVİ

KARAR
23154

1- İstanbul Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Hijyen ve Sosyal Hijyen Ordinaryüs Profesörlüğüne, 4936 sayılı Üniversiteler kanununun 28 nci maddesine göre Fakülte Profesörler Kurulunca seçilmiş ve Senatoca uygun görülmüş olan adı geçen Kürsü Profesörlerinden Dr. Muhittin Erel'in tayini tensip edilmiştir.

2- Bu kararı Millî Eğitim Bakanı yürütür.

23-2-1950

CUMHURBAŞKANI

İsmet İnönü

Başbakan

Millî Eğitim Bakanı

030 | 11 | 1 | 212

Figure 3 Decree dated 23rd of December 1950 [14]

As it is known, culture and public health have been together and parallel with each other in every period of history. Historical information about these two concepts that are closely associated with each other is very important and valuable as they have shed light on today. Even when it was impossible to access any information about physiology, pathology, bacteriology, and sociology, it was possible to learn the information about public health and its practices, which was a distinguished matter. It is understood that empirical practical public health measures were used for issues about diseases in earlier times. However, public health was based on the scientific principles later. The single goal in public health should never be a scientific study following only a theoretical path. Therefore, collecting necessary information, using this information practically and more importantly, reaching a useful outcome at the end are required.

In accordance with the matters mentioned above, this study aimed to reveal the views of Hirsch and Erel on objectives and principles of public health and share the information obtained from the comparison with today by assessing the First Edition of "*Public Health Coursebook*" [15] which was prepared by Julius Hirsch and Muhiddin Erel and published by Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine in 1938.

Methods

The study was designed with the multiple document analysis method in qualitative research. First, original edition of the *Public Health Coursebook* was purchased from a website with rare books. The book was thoroughly examined and the "Purpose and Principles of Hygiene (Public Health)" part in the first volume was evaluated. Information in the book was compared with today's information according to the methodology of history of medicine.

Secondly, the Republic Archive Catalog of the Turkish Presidency of the Republic of Turkiye State Archives was scanned. "Julius Hirsch", "Muhiddin Erel", "Hirsch", "Erel", "refugee scientists", "foreign physicians", "University Reform", "Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine", "Hygiene" and "public health" were used as keywords for scan. Documents outside our scope of work were excluded. Finally, four archival documents considered to be relevant to our study were included in the study. This study did not require ethics committee approval in terms of its scope.

Results

Objectives and tasks of public health according to Hirsch and Erel

Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health according to Hirsch and Erel. Its primary objective is to protect public's health and ensure sustainability of this condition. Its main responsibility is to reveal potential hazards to human health. For that purpose, it takes advantage of disciplines such as physiology, genetics and environmental and cultural studies. In accordance with this information, it tries to strengthen the resistance of body when it is impossible to prevent environmental hazards. It includes both absence of disease and the state of feeling good in the definition of health in the book. It uses all the disciplines and interdisciplinary methods for the state of absolute well-being. According to the authors, public health measures do not aim to remove natural limits of life, in other words, death in old age. It aims to prevent people from untimely death and diseases and provide capability to act until old ages. Its practices and analyses of individuals do not aim to protect life of a single group or individual but obtain information that can be generalized for the whole community and make deductions.

However, according to Hirsch and Erel, the primary goal of public health practice has sometimes been ignored and sometimes even been forgotten by the new scientific public health which is based on analysis and research. Public health specialists have worked only as scientific researchers in physiology, bacteriology, sociology or statistical disciplines. However, in the opinion of the authors, the real purpose of public health has never been a scientific research following only a theoretical way. Of course, it is necessary to collect the required information but the most important point is being able to practically use this information and utilize this practice efficiently. Responsibility of public health is not limited to analyzing environmental issues of humans in physical, chemical and biological aspects. The information of the agent-disease-transmission route revealed by bacteriology is undoubtedly crucial in the control of outbreaks. In addition, control of outbreaks will be possible only with the methods that can be applied by all grades of society. Therefore, according to the book, public health serves as a bridge between scientific techniques and social and cultural structures.

As stated in the relevant section of the book, scientific analysis of cultural and social environment started after the dramatic political and social revolutions had begun in the eighteenth century. Industrialization of the Middle and Western Europe, establishment of large industrial cities, migrations of a large part of populations from villages to towns, and emergence of large work classes caused new circumstances, which resulted in new social responsibilities in the research and practice of public health. Protection from occupational and industrial hazards, homelessness, nutritional difficulties, child and female labor force, population decline, and corruption of generation were some of these. The population decline due to wars and economic crises revealed urgency and importance of these responsibilities in western countries.

Hirsch and Erel accepted the main purpose of public health as the responsibility to protect public health. For this reason, they explained the purpose of public health as protecting and improving public health and ensuring the sustainability of this situation.

Characteristics of public health according to Hirsch and Erel

Hirsch and Erel revealed that public health practices based on scientific studies must also be socially supported. Therefore, scientific

assessment of environment or events must be in accordance with the rules of social and cultural environment.

Physiology and pathology accept and analyze human as a sample of its kind as well as conceptually assessing age, sex and race differences. A public health specialist works with human groups living under local, political, economic, occupational, or any special common conditions. According to Hirsch and Erel, there was a practical public health before the principles for protection of health were scientifically developed. Public health firstly begins with cultural life and may be an important condition making the start of a culture possible. The parallelism between public health and culture was clearly seen in the history of mankind and history of each nation separately.

As stated in the book, public health measures and views in history are generally various in different cultures. Although they have a common goal public health always differs by place and time. No matter how public health measures are dependent on superstitious beliefs like in primitive tribes or religions like in old nations or based on law like in classical nations, they have always minded the protection and eternity of a society, tribe or nation.

People individually must follow health rules required by religion and law for the benefit of society, according to Hirsch and Erel. Health measures such as isolation of patients with leprosy or providing sanitary systems such as water installation and Turkish baths are useful for public health. It can be concluded that the concept of individual health is directly associated with public health practices in the book. However, public health practices that do not reach all grades of society and all individuals will not give the desired result.

Public health practices are considerably associated with financial, economic and political condition of a society at present in the opinion of the authors. Even countries with quite developed individual and social health substructures have experienced serious public health problems due to social and economic crises after wars.

According to Hirsch and Erel, it is not possible to completely distinguish the limits of science of public health from the other scientific disciplines in terms of methodology. Especially issues on occupational public health require having knowledge in various fields. For example, license examinations and vocational counseling require medical, mental and pedagogic information and experience. Working hours should not only be assessed in terms of physical and mental tiredness and fatigue but also be assessed considering the efficiency.

As mentioned in the book, general characteristics of public health are as follows: It is practical; it has social and cultural quality; it has been practiced since the most ancient civilizations and in various ways based on the needs even when its method is unknown (it is universal and timeless); and it requires having knowledge in several fields with a multidisciplinary approach.

Method of public health according to Hirsch and Erel

In the assessment of public health in terms of method, Hirsch and Erel stated that it was not possible to exactly distinguish the limits of the discipline of public health from the other disciplines. It is possible to say that there are almost no natural science methods that cannot be used in solving a public health problem with the exception that all the theoretical and practical fields of medicine are related to some public health subjects.

Responsibility of public health is not limited with physically, chemically and biologically assessing issues about the environment of an individual in the book. Effects of social and cultural environment on the individual stay out of these assessments and practices and they can only be assessed with the science of culture methods. For example, if the effect of a specific room on health is assessed a decision can be made firstly by using the methods of physical science. By physically assessing the room, heat, humidity, dimension, light, and other features of the room can be determined and whether they are adequate for known physiological needs or not is investigated. Available deficiencies can be removed thanks to some technical measures such as heating, airflow and so on. However, such measures lead to expenses and health-related deficiencies that are seen with the physical and physiological tests cannot be removed due to economic reasons even if there is no difficulty in terms of practice. According to the book, some public health issues have an economic, social and a public health specialist can figure these out only together with the help of an economist.

As stated in relevant section of the book, many researchers providing great services in the field of social public health asserted the separation of social public health and general public health working with the methods of natural disciplines as social public health requires special methods. Not all public health specialists are expected to work in the social and economic fields. Moreover, it is improper to expect all public health specialists to efficiently work in the fields of nutrition physiology, food analyses, water installation, control agency, bacteriology, etc. The methods of which they have full knowledge and their personal skills and orientations will guide them as a researcher in one of these fields. However, specialization in any research area should never cause a deficiency in training and practices of general public health. Especially issues on occupational public health require having knowledge in various fields. Investigation of industrial accidents is based on the information about the structure of machinery and management of the factory. Issues on chemical industry can generally be enlightened with the toxicological experiences.

According to Hirsch and Erel, these examples of occupational public health clearly reveal that it is not accurate to divide public health into classes in terms of method. These kinds of ideas cause division of public health into several separate disciplines that have been available for a long time such as chemistry, physics, biology, pathology, technology, economy, sociology, pedagogy, and psychology. In other words, different disciplines have a common goal with public health. This goal is protection and promotion of health.

While Hirsch and Erel were assessing the method of public health in their book they often emphasized that public health was a practical discipline. It was mentioned in the last part of the section that structuring of practical public health was a form of government and among national affairs as it had social goals and was dependent on economic condition.

In the book, human was not considered only as the subject of physiology in terms of approach to human. On the contrary, human is a social being with needs and orientations. These needs and orientations should be met so that human can feel himself or herself comfortable and healthy. Health is not quite the opposite of disease in the meaning accepted by pathologists. According to practical public health specialists, health includes a subjective comfort above a physiologically objective normal state, in other words, a state of feeling good.

Discussion

According to Hirsch and Erel, health cannot be merely limited to physiological well-being of individuals and one condition of being healthy is that individuals feel themselves comfortable and well. Feeling well is possible by meeting the needs of individuals as well as being healthy. In the constitution (1948) of WHO, health was defined as the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. In the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion that was published after the conference in Ottawa in 1986, fundamental conditions and sources for health were defined as peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity. Today's public health perspective has also been shaped in the light of these statutes and contracts. It is generally possible to say that this approach in the related charter is compatible with the perspective of Hirsch and Erel on the requirement of meeting the needs stated as the prerequisites of wellbeing and thereby health. However, the frame of “needs” mentioned by the author was clearly formed and their scope was explained with this charter under the title of fundamental conditions and resources for health [16].

Another important point emphasized in the method of public health by Hirsch and Erel was the effective use of several different disciplines in the practice of public health. This requirement has been mentioned

in contemporary views on healthcare services. This matter was similarly discussed in the Declaration of Alma-Ata of 1978 [17]. According to this principle, public health is not only related to health sector but also a social issue that must be dealt with in cooperation of many sectors with a multidimensional approach. According to this approach, obtaining useful results from public health practices, which was stated as the most important goal of public health by Hirsch and Erel, is possible with coordinative work of many disciplines and sectors such as education, environment, economy, religion, communication, and agriculture. In the Declaration of Astana published after the Conference on Primary Health Care which took place in Astana in 2018, economic, social and environmental dimensions of health were emphasized and multisector initiatives were supported [18, 19].

Another important point emphasized by Hirsch and Erel was that public health was a practical science. It was stated in the book that the structure of public health was under the state administration when especially social objectives and economic aspects of public health practices were considered. Nowadays, one of the main elements of the development of health approaches is good governance for health. According to this approach, development of health must be in the center of health policies. Possible health outcomes must be taken into consideration in all decisions and preventive health policies must be prioritized. Moreover, private sector should be supported in a direction compatible with these policies [20].

According to Hirsch and Erel, objective and primary responsibility of public health are to detect conditions that will threaten health by reaching all grades of society and utilizing all disciplines and develop practical methods to protect and main public health. Similarly, Dr. Charles Edward Amory Winslow defined public health in 1923 as follows: "*Public Health is the science and the art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting physical health and efficiency through organized community efforts for the sanitation of the environment, the control of community infections, the education of the individual in principles of personal hygiene, the organization of medical and nursing service for the early diagnosis and preventive treatment of disease, and the development of the social machinery which will ensure to every individual in the community a standard of living adequate for the maintenance of health*" [18, 19]. Similarly, the objective and responsibility of public health were reported as 'taking organized community measures to promote health, prevent diseases and prolong life in that way' in the Acheson Report of 1988 [21]. As can be seen in the 'Sustainable Development Goals' that were determined after the 'Millennium Development Plan', the aims and targets of public health continue today with the main headings parallel to the past [22]. It is possible to say that views of Hirsch and Erel on the objective and main task of public health are consistent with those in the prior and next periods.

It was reported in the Declaration of Alma-Ata published after a meeting in Geneva in 1978 that basic health services must be applied with practical, cross-sector, scientifically valid, and socially acceptable methods, have a cost that could be paid by a country or society and be accessible for everybody [17]. In the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion that was signed at the conference held in Ottawa in 1986, studies on health promotion were carried out in accordance with the same basic principles and characteristics [23]. In the Jakarta Declaration on the Leading Health Promotion into the 21st Century, these action plans and strategies were approved as suitable for all countries in July 1997 [24]. Basic principles in the protection of health according to the perspective of today's public health are social equality, environmental integrity, conformity to social and cultural environment, priority for protection, integrated and interdisciplinary service, and universality [18, 19]. According to this information, it will not be incorrect to say that the view of Hirsh and Erel on public health and its general characteristics are consistent with the national and international data. They explained the characteristics of public health in 1938 as follows: It is a practical discipline; it is not for a single individual but for the whole society; it is dependent on the social and cultural features and economic and political conditions; it is universal although its practices vary in different geographies; its beginning is based on the birth of humankind; and it is a multidisciplinary field that can utilize all disciplines.

Hirsch and Erel's books are great works that will live forever and ever. The subjects and explanations they addressed on public health are important for the history of medicine and public health works and valid matters even today as they have come to light in the COVID-19 pandemic process we experience today. It has been concluded that their views and thoughts on the objectives and principles of public health can be a guide for today's modern information. We think that it is important to bring similar books to literature by evaluating them with field experts.

Information

The Surname Law was adopted in 1934 in Turkiye. Thus, surnames of the Turkish people whose names were mentioned before 1934 were written in brackets in the study. Republic of Turkiye Presidency State Archives Republic Archive were abbreviated as BCA in the study. The information about date, fund, box, dust jacket, and sequence of the archive documents were collocated. The abstract of this study was presented as an oral presentation at the SDU 2. Health Services Symposium.

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