Description: A timely concern in the era of Covid-19 is the changing character of cultural authority in the health domain: the capacity of medical and health professionals to define the parameters of health, disease, treatment, and wellness. To bring the concept of cultural authority more squarely into the analytical spotlight, I examine four developments of recent decades that have posed challenges to the ability of medical institutions to assert and sustain cultural authority: the resurgence of alternative healing, the advent of new forms of self-care and self-monitoring, the rise of health social movements, and the spread of health information online. These developments are consequential for patients and health professionals, but they also matter for society as a whole at a time when health-related expertise is increasingly subject to political claims and counterclaims.

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