

Population Health and Society

What is Population Health all About?

What is Health?

- WHO: 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'
- Opposite terms:
 - **Disease:** a body malfunction of physiological or biological origin
 - **Illness:** how an individual experiences the disease
 - **Sickness:** expectations of illness behaviour of the person experiencing the disease
- Health is more fluid and subjective:
 - Ability to cope with any ailments / function
 - Sense of physical and mental wellness
 - Something that exists on a continuum, not as absolute states
 - Baseline level of functioning to be able to behave

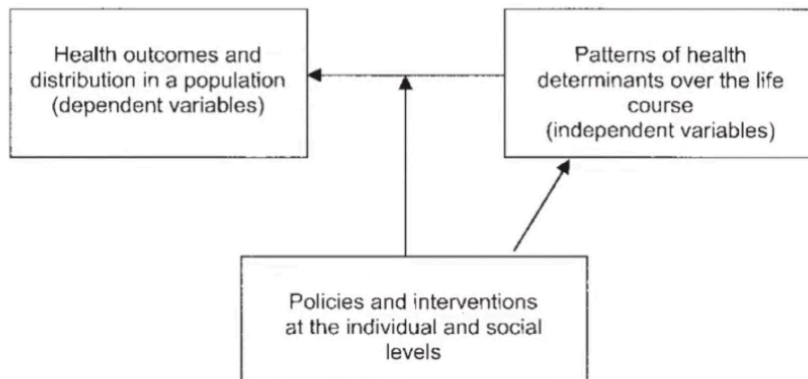
Approach	Understanding of Health
Biological	The role of genes and their interactions with other determinants of health
Biomedical	Medically defined pathology
Behavioural	The role of lifestyles on behaviour
Public health	Reducing disease prevalence rates and controlling communicable disease
Health education	Reducing risk factors and promoting healthy behaviour
Sociological	The role of social, political, economic and cultural factors
Health promotion	Health as a means to an end, such as happiness and an improved quality of life
New public health	Political and economic causes of disease, social justice and equity

- **Health equity:** the right to have equitable access to services on the basis of need.
- **Health inequity:** the measurable differences and disparities in health status between individuals and groups

What is Population Health?

- Population / social notions of health are more encompassing
 - **Focus:** health as a social, economic, political and global issue.
 - **Causes of ill-health:** inequity, the social gradient of disease, environmental pollution, working conditions, housing standards, power relations
 - **Solution:** governments and communities taking responsibilities, e.g. making policies
- The population health approach 'seeks to improve the health of whole populations or specific populations' by controlling the social and environmental determinants of health, such as decreasing inequity or changing unhealthy work environments.
- Population health is about:
 - **Definition and measurement of health outcomes** and their distribution

- Using epidemiological tools
- **Patterns of determinants** that influence such outcomes
 - Analysis of the patterns of health to understand **why they occur**
- **Policies** that influence the optimal balance of determinants
 - Efficiency of policies/programs geared towards reducing the social gradient of disease



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- Population is important to understand the context of health to improve health
 - Myopic (short-sighted) reactions focus solely on behaviour change - this end up blaming the victim and worsening health outcomes and inequalities

Interprofessional Team Based Care:

- **Fragmentation:** where health professionals work solely within the confines of their position.
 - Holistic care and interprofessional collaboration and lacking
 - Solution:
 - Interprofessional team-based care
 - Gives multiple perspectives
 - Improves patient and population outcomes
- **Accreditation:** requires critical thinking and understanding population health

Victim Blaming:

- Attributing to a person the cause of their own misfortune. This occurs when health policies and practices focus solely on individuals and forget about the social, political and economic environments that shape individual behaviours.

Models and Determinants of Health:

Understanding Health:

- How we define, understand and react to health and illness largely depends on our discipline and scope.
- Care vs Choice
 - In public health campaigns, individuals are all addressed as having a 'lifestyle' and 18/3/17 encourage to 'opt for one that is better'
 - Health is in their own power and they can go out and be proactive about their health to improve health outcomes.
 - **Logic of choice:**
 - Choice over what your health is going to be
 - Empowered to change it and participate in healthy behaviours
 - **Logic of care:**
 - Individuals don't have a choice over their own health
 - Lack basic healthy needs
 - Hygiene
 - Removal of waste
 - Water and food supply
 - Rather than telling individuals what to choose, caring interventions try to improve the conditions under which we live.

Biomedical and Behavioural Models of Health:

- **Biomedical model:**
 - Focus: Individuals who are sick, pathology, genes and microorganisms
 - Advantages: enhanced understanding of anatomy, physiology, biochemistry
 - Treatment for a range of illnesses, e.g. antibiotics
 - Treatment for injuries, e.g. rehab after injury
 - Prevention, e.g. vaccinations
 - Disadvantages:
 - Emphasis on treatment - high profit treatment, rather than prevention
 - Services are often skewed to those who can pay
 - Inequities in access
 - Social, environmental and functional aspects of health/illness are not typically included
- **Behavioural model:**
 - Individual has the power to improve health
 - Focus: individuals who take risks, e.g. smoking, diet, alcohol
 - Advantages: personal health interventions can be effective
 - Trying to change the way in which people behave
 - Disadvantages: lifestyle interventions are often only effective for the middle - upper class
 - Have to have the resources
 - Ignores environmental determinants
 - Access to health resources

Biomedical and Behavioural Approaches to Reducing Heart Disease		
Model	Causes of Problems	Principal Strategies to Address Problem
Biomedical	Family history	Medication
	Hypercholesterolemia	Angioplasty
	Hypertension	Low salt diet
Behavioural	High stress levels	Self-help
	Lifestyle	Health communication
	Low level of physical activity	Health education
	Smoking	
	Unhealthy diet	Advocacy for health public policies supporting lifestyle choices

Social and Environmental Models of Health:

- The circumstances in which people live and work are intimately related to risk of illness and length of life.
- Environmental Model:** places, physical structures and public policy
 - The environment that people live in and how that can effect health
 - Geographic location
 - Housing conditions
 - Access to services
 - Advantages:
 - Addresses the 'causes of the causes' of ill health
 - Focuses on prevention of ill health and improving the equity in the distribution of health
 - Disadvantages:
 - Getting evidence for evaluating the health impact of environments and policy can be difficult
- Social Model:** looks at the inequities between different groups in society - social gradient of disease
 - Advantages:
 - Addresses the 'causes of the causes' of ill health
 - Focuses on prevention of ill health and improving the equity in the distribution of health
 - Disadvantages:
 - Medicine as a business is more interested in profit
 - Political obstacles
 - Funding inequities

Social and Environmental Approaches to Reducing Heart Disease		
Model	Causes of Problems	Principal Strategies to Address Problem
Social	Social isolation	Policy change
	Low position in social hierarchy	Advocacy
	Low autonomy	Mutual aid
Environmental	Passive smoking	Reduce occupational risks
	Exposure to hydrocarbons	Improve access to services
	Toxic air pollutants	Improve housing conditions
	Working conditions	Community mobilisation
	Living conditions	