

PSY172 | INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY IN AUSTRALIA | NOTES EXTRACTS FOR SAMPLE

Health Inequalities and Health Risk Behaviour:

- **Terminology:**
 - **Epidemiology:** study of the cause and transmission of disease within a population.
 - **Prevalence:** The total number of EXISTING cases of a disorder as a proportion of a population at a specific time. Usually expressed as a number per 100, 000.
 - **Incidence:** The total number of NEW cases of a disorder as a proportion of a population at a specific time. Usually expressed as a number per 100, 000.
 - **Mortality:** death
 - **Morbidity:** The incidence of a particular disease or disorder in a population. Usually expressed as cases per 100, 000 or per million in one year.
 - **Risk Factors:**
 - **Proximal Risk Factors:** The risk factor(s) in the causal chain that actually precipitate disease, as distinguished from predisposing or distal risk factors.
 - **Behavioural Risk Factors:** These are common risk factors associated with ways people behave.
- **Health Statistics:**
 - Summary:**
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders lower life expectancy and higher risk to causes of death including external factors such as violence and car crashes.
 - Third world countries worse off than Japan and Australia for life expectancy due to insufficient environment and access to adequate services.
- **Health Inequalities:**
 - **Social Factors in Health:**
 - **Socioeconomic status:**
 - Poor nutrition
 - Unhealthy water
 - Poor healthcare
 - Less accessibility to health care
 - Greater levels of stress
 - Greater levels of morbidity
 - Differences in health behaviour. E.g. smoking, exercise
- **Health Risk Behaviour:**
- **What is health behaviour?**
 - “Any activity undertaken by a person believing themselves to be healthy for the purpose of preventing disease or detecting it at an asymptomatic stage.”
Kasl & Cobb (1966)
 - Matarazzo (1984) Distinguished between:
 - **Behavioural pathogens:** The health damaging behaviours such as excessive alcohol consumption, smoking, fatty diet.
 - **Behavioural immunogens:** The health protective behaviours such as exercise, health screening uptake, breast self-examinations, and low fat diets.
 - **Individual Factors in Health:** nutrition, high blood pressure, access, environment, unsafe sex, unhealthy diet (fat, cholesterol, salt), excessive alcohol, smoking

- **Social:** stressful or violent environment due to war or domestic issues.
- Alameda Seven (1965) study
- **Actions to improve health behaviour:**
 - Restrictions on product sales and advertising.
 - Funding advertising of sporting teams and events
 - Campaigns to point behavioural pathogens and immunogens.
 - Funding organizations that provide help and advice.
 - Evaluation research to assess the effectiveness of the various initiatives.
- $$BMI = \frac{\text{kilograms}}{\text{metres}^2}$$

HEALTH- ENHANCING BEHAVIOUR

- Negatives:**
- Drugs** | Harm to users, harm to others
 - Exercise** | addiction, excessive weight loss, injury
 - Barriers: Time, financial cost, lack of access to appropriate facilities, low self- esteem to get started, low energy levels, lack of support.
- Positives:**
- Healthy diet** | No evidence of high fruit & veg intake lowers risks of cancers
 - Exercise** | Protect health, strengthen heart, improve Cardio & Spiro, lowers body fat, stress reduction, improve self-image
 - Mental Health** | Exercise= endorphins, muscle relaxation, increase social activity, increase time spent outside, goal achievement improves confidence, less alcohol, smoking, caffeine.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DISEASE AND ILLNESS

- **Disease:** Something of the organ, cell or tissue which denotes a physical disorder or underlying pathology.
- **Illness:** What the person experiences.

MANAGING STRESS

- **Problem- focused coping:** A person's relationship with the environment is changed by coping actions the conditions of psychological stress may also be changed for the better.
- **Emotion- focused coping:** Changes only the way we attend to or interpret what is happening. Deny/ distance is good coping method.

FIVE MAIN COPING TASKS

- Modify threatening **external** conditions
- Accepting or **adjusting** to negative events
- Maintaining a **positive** self- image including efficacy
- Maintaining **emotional** equilibrium and decreasing emotional stress
- Maintaining a satisfactory and helpful **relationship** with the environment or with others.

STRESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING

- Target environmental stressors | triggers
- Behavioural | avoidance
- Physiological | increase respiration, muscle tension
- Cognitive responses | catastrophic thinking