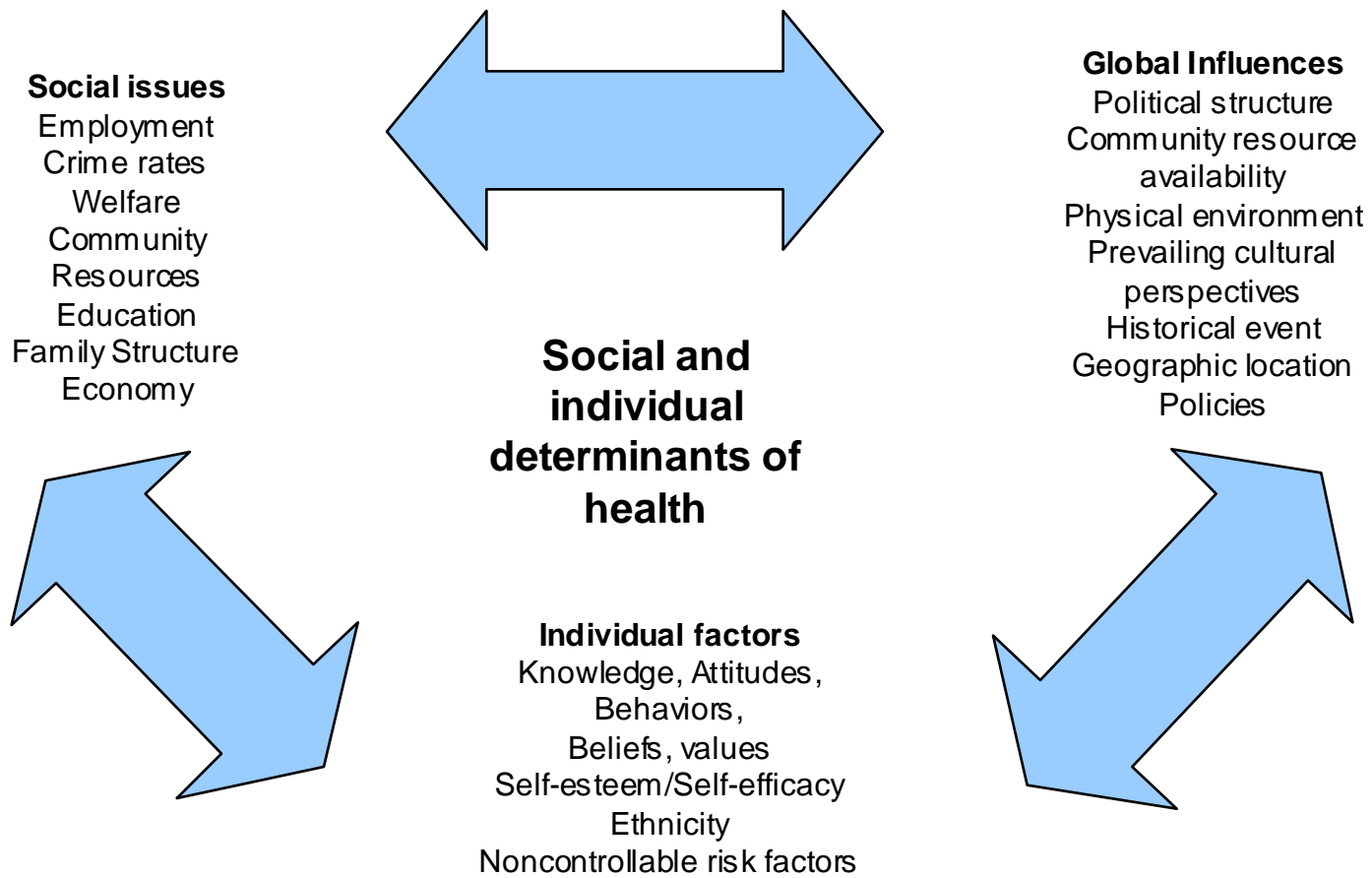


Social determinants of health

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November 7, 2007



Adapted from Doyle & Ward (2001). The Process of Community Health Education and Promotion, Mountain View: Mayfield

Individual factors

- Individuals are influenced by their friends, family, external environments, communities and laws.
- Individual choice is governed by not only the individual's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, but also by those factors external.
- Decisions are often made based on cultural norms as well as individual knowledge or ability.
- We attempt to establish cause and effect from behavior to health outcomes.
- We must acknowledge that behavior is influenced by a host of factors that may or may not be obvious. These interrelationships are complex, non-linear, and variable.

- Resnicow & Vaughn, A chaotic view of behavior change: a quantum leap for health promotion. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 2006, 3:25

Social issues

- Employment
- Crime rates
- Welfare
- Community Resources
- Education
- Family Structure
- Economy

Global Influences

- Political structure
- Community resource availability
- Physical environment
- Prevailing cultural perspectives
- Historical events
- Geographic location
- Policies

Interactions

- ◆ What are the interactions among social, global and individual factors?
- ◆ How do employment, crime, welfare, community resources, education, family structure, and the economy affect individual choices and global factors?
- ◆ How do the political structure, community resource availability, physical environment, prevailing cultural perspectives, historical events, geographic location, and policies affect individual choices and social factors?
- ◆ Each factor influences every other factor singularly and collectively.

Community Tracking Study

- The Center for Studying Health System Change (HSC) documents changes in health care systems over time and tracks the effects of those changes on people.
- The core of these efforts is HSC's Community Tracking Study (CTS), a set of periodic surveys and site visits that allows researchers to analyze information about local markets and the nation as a whole.
- The survey samples are concentrated in 60 communities that were randomly selected to provide a representative profile of change across the U.S. Among these communities, 48 are "large" metropolitan areas (with populations greater than 200,000), from which 12 communities were randomly selected to be studied in depth. Those 12 communities have larger survey samples and also comprise the communities used for the site visits.

(<http://www.hschange.com> retrieved 1/27/2007)

CTS 2003

- An analysis was conducted on a national data set (N=46,587) to compare results across the sample. General health was classified as the dependent variable, race/ethnicity, poverty, age, gender, and educational attainment were the independent variables.

Results

- After adjusting for other factors in the model, self reported general health was significantly associated with race/ethnicity and gender.
- Educational attainment is closely related to health outcomes.
- Additionally, those with high school or less were 3.6 times more likely to report being below poverty level regardless of age, gender or race/ethnicity.

Socioeconomic status

- SES is comprised of work (employment), educational attainment (education), income (family structure, economy, and welfare), and class (politics, policies, history).*
- In this sample, work, educational attainment and income were calculated variables.
- Class is a tougher variable to categorize as it is not fixed. Regardless of achievement of individuals' education, work and income, social factors of racism and discrimination found in global influences may continue to block individual's success.
- These variables of SES have subtle and complex relationships and are influenced by social and global factors.

* Mirowsky & Ross (2003). Education, Social Status and Health. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Education

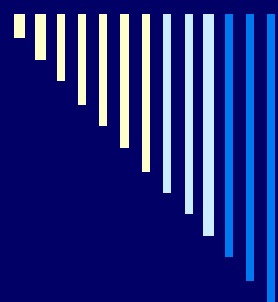
- One of the most pervasive factors in health and health outcomes is educational attainment.
- When one has successful completion of an educational program (college and above), that individual has not only gained needed skills in the workplace, but also critical thinking skills to protect him/her in life challenges.
- Education provides a foundation and entry into the job market. It also provides more choices in job selection.
- Those with post HS education have greater income and life challenges are less severe than those who don't attain a high school diploma.

Social determinants



- Educational attainment is influenced by many factors, including, but not limited to, employment, working conditions, community resources, welfare, poverty, and racism/discrimination, as well as ethnicity, political structure, and historical events.
- These factors also play a role in health disparities.
- Many global factors inhibit the adoption of healthful behaviors, including the built environment, access to resources, lack of adequate programs.
- Health disparities have many causes. They also have additive effects on a community's ability to marshal resources, address the root causes, and implement solutions. When communities are disenfranchised, they are less able to utilize capacity and develop social capital.

Link, B. & Phelan, J. (2005). Fundamental sources of health inequalities. In D. Mechanic (Ed.) *Policy Challenges in Modern Health Care*. New York: Rutgers University Press.



Social context of health disparities

- It is necessary to consider the social context of all health factors if we truly want to address, reduce, and eliminate health disparities.
- We will not be able to eliminate disparities if we focus solely on the individually based risk factors. Social factors have a more profound influence.
- Identification and reduction of negative social factors are necessary components in programs designed to address and eliminate health disparities.
- Policy changes are needed.



Promotion and Prevention

- To eliminate health disparities and increase prevention practices, comprehensive approaches to improve all people's health are needed.
- These include policy changes for increasing opportunities for educational attainment and targeted programs for behavior modification for all.