

Determinants of health

PH1.5: Identify the five determinants of health



Think about our school. What factors within and around the school affect your health? List as many as you can.

DISCUSS

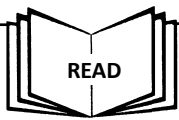
With a partner, share the factors on your list and together come up with a list of CATEGORIES or GROUPS into which these factors might fit.

NEW
INFO

REVIEW: What is a risk factor? Write the definition below:

When it comes to our health, the list of factors that influence it can seem endless. In order to improve our health, we need to understand this myriad of factors in order to account for everything that influences us. When health researchers want to study just one or a few of these factors they must acknowledge the many other factors that are also a part of the puzzle. Unfortunately, when it comes to health, we cannot typically isolate our independent variable and control everything. Therefore we must use statistical methods to calculate the associations between various factors.

When we think about improving mental health, we must start by identifying as many factors that influence it as we can. To make our job easier, we will use the five determinants of health. These groupings are identified by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) as logical categories to analyze the risk factors that influence our health.



FIVE DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: What are these determinants? Read the overview from the CDC below:

Many factors combine together to affect the health of individuals and communities. Whether people are healthy or not, is determined by their circumstances and environment. To a large extent, factors such as where we live, the state of our environment, genetics, our income and education level, and our relationships with friends and family all have considerable impacts on health, whereas the more commonly considered factors such as access and use of health care services often have less of an impact.

Source: <http://www.who.int/hia/evidence/doh/en/>

Determinants of health are factors that contribute to a person's current state of health. These factors may be biological, socioeconomic, psychosocial, behavioral, or social in nature. Scientists generally recognize five determinants of health of a population [2, 3]:

Genes and biology: for example, sex and age

Health behaviors: for example, alcohol use, injection drug use (needles), unprotected sex, and smoking

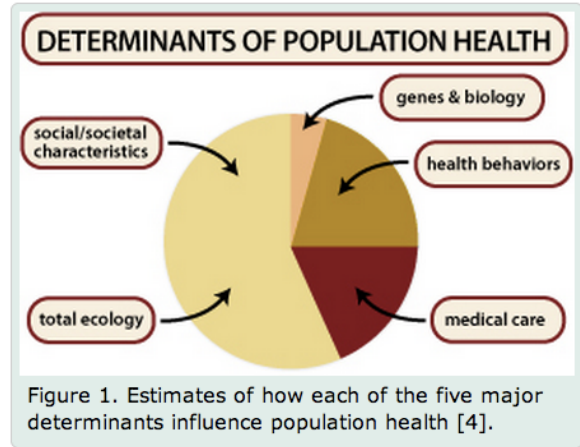
Social environment or social characteristics: for example, discrimination, income, and gender

Physical environment (or total ecology): for example, where a person lives and crowding conditions

Health services or medical care: for example, access to quality health care and having or not having insurance

Figure 1. Estimates of how each of the five major determinants influence population health [4]. Other factors that could be included are culture, social status, and healthy child development. Figure 1 represents rough estimates of how much each of the five determinants contributes to the health of a population. Scientists do not know the precise contributions of each determinant at this time.

As the figure shows, in theory, genes, biology, and health behaviors together account for about 25% of population health. Social determinants of health represent the remaining three categories of social environment, physical environment/total ecology, and health services/medical care. These social determinants of health also interact with and influence individual behaviors as well. More specifically, social determinants of health refer to the set of factors that contribute to the social patterning of health, disease, and illness.



Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/FAQ.html>

DISCUSS

With a partner, review Figure 1 again and discuss the following questions:

- 1) Does anything surprise you about these estimates?

- 2) If these estimates are correct, where should we focus time, energy, resources, and policies in order to improve our overall health as a society?



In a group, work together to fill in the following table by listing examples of each determinant in the context of MENTAL HEALTH. One example is provided for you in each box so that you can get a head start.

Determinant	Examples
Genes & Biology	-Family history of mental health illnesses
Health Behaviors	-Alcohol or drug use

Determinant	Examples
Social Environment or Social Characteristics	-Quality of relationships with family members
Physical environment (total ecology)	-Space (crowded living conditions)
Health Services or Medical Care	-Regular and high quality physicals with primary care physician



Match each possible risk/protective factor for mental health (from the left side) to the health determinant group (right side):

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. Previous history of abuse | A. Genes & Biology |
| _____ 2. Having no health insurance | |
| _____ 3. Family history of mental health problems | B. Health Behaviors |
| _____ 4. Residential crowding | |
| _____ 5. Stressful working conditions | C. Social Environment or Social Characteristics |
| _____ 6. Supportive relationships | |
| _____ 7. Loud exterior noises (ex: airport) | D. Physical Environment (total ecology) |
| _____ 8. Gender | |
| _____ 9. Unemployment | E. Health Services or Medical Care |
| _____ 10. Low income | |



Choose ANY health problem, illness, or condition you are interested and list risk and protective factors for it. Try to get at least 5-10 factors. Then label them according to which determinant they fit under. You may use the labels above (A-E).