



The Intersection of Social Determinants and Epidemiology in Public Health

Social Determinants and Epidemiology in Public Health

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INTRODUCTION

Social Determinants Of Health (SDOH) are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and they are widely recognized as major drivers of health and well-being. Understanding the impact of social determinants on health is crucial for effective public health interventions, as health outcomes are shaped by a complex interplay of individual, social, and environmental factors. In this context, epidemiology is a critical discipline that provides evidence on the patterns, causes, and outcomes of health and disease in populations.

Epidemiology is the study of the distribution and determinants of health and disease in populations, and it provides a framework for examining the social determinants of health. The social determinants of health can be divided into several categories, including income and wealth, education, employment, housing, and access to healthcare. These social determinants are interrelated and can have a significant impact on health outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Income and wealth are widely recognized as major social determinants of health. Studies have shown that income and wealth are strongly associated with health outcomes, such as life expectancy, infant mortality, and rates of chronic diseases. This relationship is due to the impact of income and wealth on access to healthcare, healthy food, and safe living conditions. In addition, poverty is a well-known risk factor for poor health outcomes and is associated with increased rates of infectious diseases, chronic conditions, and mental health issues.

DESCRIPTION

Education is another important social determinant of health, as it is strongly associated with health literacy, health seeking behaviors, and access to healthcare. Low levels of education can result in limited health literacy and decreased knowledge about healthy behaviors, which can increase the risk of poor health outcomes. Education also affects employment opportunities and income, both of which are important determinants of health.

Employment is a key determinant of health, as it affects income, social status, and access to health insurance. Unstable and low wage employment can result in decreased access to healthcare and an increased risk of chronic health conditions. Furthermore, exposure to hazardous working conditions and long working hours can increase the risk of injury and poor health outcomes.

Housing is another important social determinant of health, as it affects living conditions, environmental exposures, and access to healthcare. Poor quality housing, including overcrowding and inadequate sanitation, can increase the risk of infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis and respiratory infections. Inadequate heating and ventilation can also result in increased respiratory problems and other health issues.

Access to healthcare is a crucial social determinant of health, as it affects health outcomes and access to care. Inequities in access to healthcare can result in disparities in health outcomes and increased rates of chronic health conditions. Access to healthcare is influenced by several factors, including income, education, and employment, as well as race, ethnicity, and geographic location.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, social determinants of health have a significant impact on health outcomes and are critical to consider in public health efforts. Epidemiology plays a crucial role in understanding the relationships between social determinants and health outcomes, providing evidence for effective public health interventions. Addressing social determinants of health requires multispectral action, including efforts to improve income and wealth, education, employment, housing, and access to healthcare. Efforts to address social determinants of health are essential for promoting health equity and reducing health disparities in populations.

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