Determinants of Health for Pacific People

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Why some people healthy and others not?

• To understand this, we must understand things that affect our lives
  • Environment, Political and Physical
  • Social interactions
  • Culture and Tradition
  • Economy
  • Human behaviour
  • Human biology and disease
  • Others

Social justice is a matter of life and death.
It affects the way people live, their consequent chance of illness, and their risk of premature death. Global Commission on SDH
What is Health?

- State of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease (WHO)
  - Do you know anyone that has achieved the state of being complete?

Health is the resource we use to do life, rather than the objective of it. Health Promotion perspective.
Key findings of the New Zealand Health Survey 2011/12

• **Good news**
  Most adults (89%) report that they have excellent, very good or good health

except..

*Groups with poorer health and more unmet need for health care included: Māori, Pacific, and adults living in more deprived areas*
Most adults were able to access health care

However, 27% of adults had an unmet need for primary health care in the past 12 months.

*Unmet need is more common among Māori, Pacific adults and people living in more deprived areas*

Many prescriptions are left unfilled due to cost

• 8% of adults did not collect one or more prescription items due to cost, in the past 12 months. This affected about 267,000 adults.
Cost to health care
A major determinant of health

• Cost prevented 17% of Pacific adults, and 7% of Pacific children, from visiting a GP when they needed to, in the past 12 months.

• Over one in ten Pacific adults and children did not collect a prescription item in the past 12 months due to the cost.

• Only one in three (33%) Pacific adults (with natural teeth) had visited a dental health care worker in the past 12 months.

• Pacific adults and children were more likely than other people to have had a tooth removed due to poor oral health in the past 12 months.
RISK FACTORS

• Smoking rates continue to decrease
  “but”
  No change was seen in the Māori smoking rate (41%).

Pacific?

• Alcohol, most adults had consumed alcohol in the past 12 months (80%).

• Māori have higher rates of hazardous drinking (36%).

• Pacific (35%) compared to 19% overall.
Many Factors Influence Health

Different levels
All related

Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991
Human Rights

• Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 25.
Determinants of Health

• Causes of causes
• Commonly referred to as Social determinants

Social determinants of health are the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work, and age, as well as the systems and the wider set of forces shaping the conditions of daily life.
Determinant of Health

The single strongest predictor of our health is our position on the ‘social gradient’ (or the ‘social ladder’). Whether measured by income, education, place of residence or occupation, those at the top on average live longer and healthier lives. Those at the bottom usually run at least twice the risk of serious illness and premature death. (Wilkinson, R, Marmot, M (Eds) 2003)
Major determinants of health for Pacific communities

1. Finance/economic insecurity
2. Employment opportunities
3. Education level
4. Social exclusion/discrimination
5. Health status, access to appropriate health care.
6. Cultural and spiritual disconnect
Commission on Social Determinants of Health
overarching recommendations, 2008

• Improve daily living conditions

• Tackle the inequitable distribution of power, money and resources

• Measure and understand the impact of the problem and assess the impact of actions
How to address social determinants of health

• Improve the health of the most disadvantaged population groups through targeted programmes

• Closing the gap between those in the poorest social circumstances and better-off groups

• Addressing the relationship between socio-economic position and health across the whole population (“Health for all”)

Poverty as a social determinant

The vicious circle:
• Ill health leads to poverty
• Poverty leads to ill health

The virtuous circle:
• Good health is linked to higher income and welfare
• Higher income is linked to good health
A great part of the solution to health inequity and challenge to address health problems has to be found outside the health sector by addressing social determinants to health
Multi-sectoral approach - Entry Points

**National**

National multi-ministerial forum
- Effective only with commitment at the highest level, need a good driver, Health in All Policies

**Subnational**

City/District/Village level
- More feasible, leverage local government, collective voice of community, government closer to the community, local ordinances

**Risk factor**

Tobacco/Alcohol/Physical Activity
- Facilitators-activism, pressure groups, champions, international agreements (FCTC), global reporting, more palpable interventions, common good /common enemy
Health Gradient
will be less steep and will be easier to achieve health, when the
determinants are removed

Multi-sectoral approach
Everyone playing on the
Same team