

The Social Determinants of Health

Taking Action to Promote Health Equity

Donna Smith MPH, RD
Policy and Program Consultant, OPHA

Keeping Kids Healthy



What determines health?

*“**Determinants of health** are the broad range of personal, social, economic and environmental factors that determine individual and population health.”* (GOV, 2018)

The main determinants of health include:

• Income and social status	• Social environments
• Employment and working conditions	• Social support networks
• Education and literacy	• Gender
• Physical environment	• Culture
• Access to health services	• Biology and genetic endowment
• Childhood experiences and development	• Personal health practices and coping skills

“Social determinants of health (SDOHs) refer to a specific group of social and economic factors within the broader determinants of health.

- These relate to an individual's place in society, such as income, education or employment.
- Experiences of discrimination or historical trauma are also important social determinants of health for certain groups such as Indigenous Peoples.” (GOV, 2018)

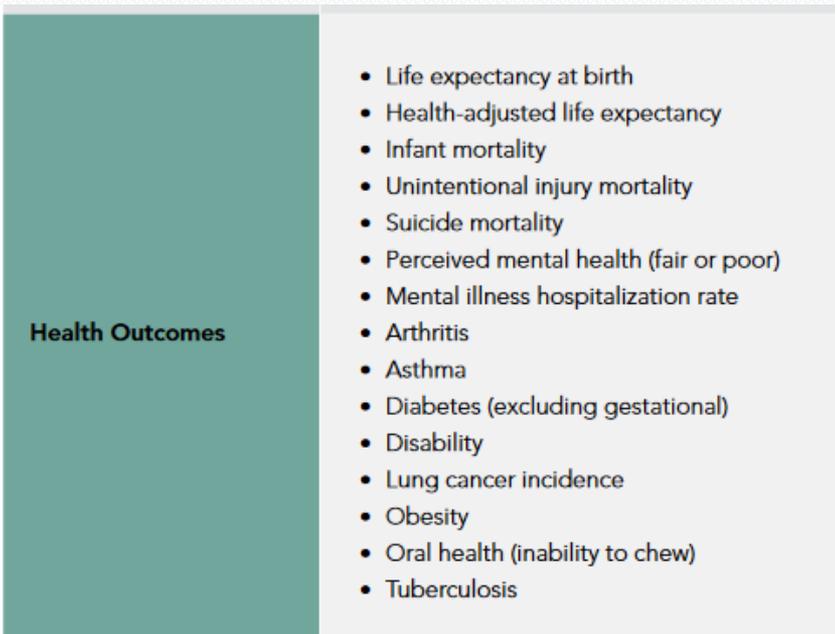
MAIN factors which influence health:

- Living conditions
- Lived experience and social context
- Access to resources, supports and services

Health Outcomes

Determinants of health contribute to various health outcomes

“**Health outcome**” is a word used to describe a health condition or state of health and wellbeing that we are interested in understanding or measuring



Health Outcomes

- Life expectancy at birth
- Health-adjusted life expectancy
- Infant mortality
- Unintentional injury mortality
- Suicide mortality
- Perceived mental health (fair or poor)
- Mental illness hospitalization rate
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Diabetes (excluding gestational)
- Disability
- Lung cancer incidence
- Obesity
- Oral health (inability to chew)
- Tuberculosis

In other words...

How we measure
health in a
population or
community

How do SDOHs lead to poor health outcomes?

Main mechanism or pathway contributing to poor health:

Adverse or deprived social and material living conditions

Such as: poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, inadequate/precarious employment, violence or unsafe living conditions, discrimination

Contribute to high levels of psychological and physiological stress

Creates chronic stress leading to illness, disease, disability, mortality; effects of social and environmental stressors are cumulative overtime

Health Inequalities vs. Health Inequities

- **Health Inequalities:** Differences in health status or outcomes between individuals or groups

Example: Higher rates of breast cancer among women than men

- **Health Inequities:** Differences in health status or outcomes (health inequalities) between individuals or groups that are considered...

avoidable/modifiable, unfair, and associated with social disadvantage

Example: Shorter life expectancy among those living in low income households vs. higher income households

How do SDOHs lead to health inequities?

- **Social context** – the structure and social relations within a society creates stratification or grouping of individuals assigned to social positions
 - E.g., assigned by gender, income, status/class, race, etc.
- **Social stratification** or social position is often hierarchal and can give rise to:
 - Differential exposure harmful conditions or barriers to health
 - Differential access to resources/services which can promote or protect health
- Differential access and exposure determines differential outcomes
 - Creates a **social gradient to health**
 - E.g., as income increases, population health/health outcomes improve

Examples: SDOHs and Health Inequities

Income

- Shapes living conditions and therefore determines the quality of other SDOHs such as food security, housing, environment, educational attainment
- Low income can predispose to material and social deprivation further worsening food insecurity, poor housing, lack of social support network... leads to chronic stress

Social Exclusion

- Marginalization and limited access to social, cultural and economic resources result in living conditions and experiences that negatively impact health
- Individuals more likely to be unemployed or earn lower wages, have less access to health and social services, less access to means of furthering their education, increased risk of chronic disease

****See the SDOH Handout and the Health Equity Resource Toolkit****

“Let’s Start a Conversation About Health... and Not Talk About Health Care at All”

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QboVEEJPNX0>

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 Through Collective Impact

OPHA
Ontario Public Health Association
l'Association pour la santé publique de l'Ontario
Established/Créé: 1988



**Let's start a conversation
about health in your community...**

How does the social context systematically disadvantage individuals and contribute to health inequities?

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTqknri15fQ>

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Addressing Health Inequities

- **Improve daily living conditions**
 - Support living and working conditions (e.g., access to safe, affordable housing and healthy food)
 - Emphasize early child development and education
 - Support social protection policy and age friendly communities
- **Tackle inequitable distribution of power**
 - Address inequities between gender and access to resources
 - ***Requires a strong, committed public sector that values collective action***
 - Government action must be embedded in principles of social justice and equity
- **Measure and understand the problem; assess impact of action**

References

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- Slide 3 – The social determinants of health
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- Slide 5 – How do SDOHs lead to poor health outcomes?
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- Slide 7 – How do social determinants of health lead to health inequities?
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- Slide 8 – Examples of social determinants of health and health inequities
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- Slide 9 – Video: Let's Start a Conversation About Health... and Not Talk About Health Care at All
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- Slide 11 – Video: Social Determinants of Health
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