

## Lecture 1

### Definitions

- Health: Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization)

### Disease vs illness vs sickness

- Disease: A specific virus, Mechanisms or path of physiology of a particular type of condition
- Illness: Person's subjective experience with a particular condition
  - Ex: w/ same virus, some people may be a little “under the weather” while others require days off work
- Sickness: Socio-cultural interpretation of that condition. Ex: Society doesn't view being sick with a common cold the same as cancer
  
- Health Inequity: Avoidable inequalities in health between groups of people within countries and between countries (World Health Organization) // Health inequalities that are unfair or unjust and modifiable (Government of Canada)
  
- Population Health: An approach to health that aims to improve the health of the entire population and to reduce health inequities among population groups (Public Health Agency of Canada)
  - Determinantes include medical care, health interventions, genetics and individual behaviors along with social (income, education, employment, culture) and physical environments (urban design, clear air, water environments)
  
- Determinants of Health: the broad range of personal, social, economic and environmental factors that determine individual and population health: income, employment, education, social support, access to services, lifestyle, physical environment, childhood experiences, genetics, gender, culture, race (Government of Canada)
  
- Public Health: The population health approach is positioned in the Public Health Agency of Canada as a unifying force for the entire spectrum of health system interventions - from prevention and promotion to health protection, diagnosis, treatment and care - and integrates and balances action between them. The approach is integral to the Department's broader role of improving the health of Canadians (Public Health Agency of Canada)

### Social determinants of health

- The conditions in which one is born, grows up, lives, works and ages, and the systems put in place to deal with illness (health system)
- Context
  - Risk factor approach”: smoking and drinking in Osaka vs Ottawa
  - Interactions between genetics and behaviours
- Socioeconomic influence
  - Incidence of most diseases is higher among people with lower incomes
- In every affluent society:
  - The richer you become, or the longer you attend school, the better your health and the longer you will live
- Education, income, and relative social position are more predictive of health
  - Canadians: health inequalities are most attributable to education
- Positive effects from lifestyle changes are greatest for people already living in favoured economic and social circumstances
- Health promotion activities broaden “gap” between health status of richest (affluent), most educated and the poorest, least educated:
  - Uptake and translation of information is faster for the affluent (more resources for lifestyle modifications than poorer people, ex: personal training, gym membership)
- Healthcare: fair access to good quality healthcare will not close the health gap between rich and poor
  - Need to shift baselines, improve conditions for the entire population
- Social epidemiologists: our current health problems arise mostly as a result of poor public policies stemming from a democratic deficit
  - The absence of fair, accountable, participatory mechanisms that foster human rights and personal development
- Path to improving population health:
  - Greater gender equity (mothers, children); lessen wage gap
  - Less socio cultural exclusion
  - Accountable government and corporations
  - Fairer employment practices
  - More supportive communities
  - Better environmental stewardship
  - Goals other than economic exploitation of natural and human resources (global economics crisis 2008)
- Securing human rights and economic sustainability: Norway, Netherlands, Australia
  - Canada has room for improvement in comparison to countries above
- Key determinants of Health:
  - Income and inequality
  - Political regimes
  - Social networks//social capital//mortality
  - Neighborhoods

- Lifestyle (ie food, transportation)

Discovering personal rhythm for healthy living

What is health?:

- Morbidity: how we express our health and well-being. Are you in chronic pain?  
Expression of your health
  - Ex: living long life but not optimal health
    - Ex: chronic pain since 40's
- Mortality: think of death and lifespan. Mortality rate: the number
- of deaths based on particular disease. Lifespan expectancy. (80s
- in Canada)
- Health as wellness: putting quality into years
  - Health: a state of being (static snapshot of that moment)
  - Wellness: The process of living a healthy lifestyle (big picture, long term)
  - "Health" & "wellness": often used interchangeably
- Prevention: key to future health
- Primary prevention (intervention)
  - Stop health problems before they start
- Secondary prevention (intervention)
  - Early intervention// reduce symptoms, slow progression
- Tertiary prevention (intervention)
  - Treatment and rehabilitation: limit effects of the disease
- Benefits of achieving optimal health
  - Improved quality of life
  - Reduced reliance on healthcare systems
  - Greater ability to manage stress (stronger immunity)
  - Enhanced self-confidence (healthy relationships)
  - Environmental awareness and sensitivity
  - Meaning and purpose (outlook on life)

End of lecture 1